THE CHURCH AND MODERN MEN

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THE CHURCH AND MODERN MEN

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BY

WILLIAM SCOTT PALMER

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PREFATORY NOTE

A FEW months ago I ventured to write an appeal to the Anglican clergy on behalf of my fellow-laymen who either do not go to church at all, or go there only by way of compliance with custom in places where that custom is not yet outworn. In consequence of this I received fresh evidence of the fact that our insular position has not only temporarily protected us from premature and open revolt, and from an equally premature synthesis of modern thought and knowledge with theology, but has unfortunately so far narrowed our outlook as to exclude Anglican laymen (many of whom are feeling acutely the difficulties which press upon them in default of any visible approach towards such a synthesis) from acquaintance with the good work that is being done and the progress that has already been made.

This state of things may justify a layman who has been learning and thinking about the matter, in offering some results of his labour, however crude they may be, if he believes that they at least show the need for better work on the part of other men, and, above all, of the clergy. I take that view with regard to the little I have done myself in relation to this great affair.

Owing to the diversity of the occasions which led

to my writing the papers of which the body of the book is composed, some overlapping in subject and treatment cannot be avoided; and I must ask indulgence on that score.

As a fitting introduction, I give (by the courtesy of the Editor of *The Church Times*) both the appeal to which I have referred, and an explanation of its purport for which opportunity was given by a letter challenging me to state my belief or disbelief in two articles of the Creed, as statements of "literal facts." For the opinions expressed in both I was, and am, solely responsible.

Six papers deal with the relation of the Church to modern thought and modern men. The other six are essays or studies in the interpretation of important matters in religious doctrine and practice. All have been written without skilled assistance, and display, no doubt, the ignorance of theology usual among laymen, even when they have been studying cognate subjects for the greater part of their lives. They are, I think, worth publishing on that account: laymen very ignorant of theology, but less ignorant of some other things with which theology has to reckon, should speak out in order that theologians may discover how to become intelligible to them.

W. S. P.

THE CHURCH AND MODERN MEN

INTRODUCTION

(From *The Church Times*)

TOWARDS THE NEW BEGINNING[1]

A LAYMAN'S APPEAL

I

THE world is making a pregnant discovery; it is discovering that the age of miracle never passes. For great numbers of us miracles are becoming affairs of common life; they are alive and full of meaning, not dead superstitions as they were in the dry days when Tyndall proposed to put prayer —that ever-present marvel—to a crucial test by having fifty per cent of the patients in a hospital prayed for and the other fifty left to their "natural" chance. This change is due chiefly to our being in rapid process of finding out that miracles in one sense are as natural as doctors and patients, and that they happen every day. In other words, we are coming to see that they are as natural as man; and that they

[1] I have made a few alterations in this article with a view to greater clearness.

are no more, although no less, miraculous. Here we touch ground; man has become miraculous—or, better, perhaps, mysterious—for the enlightened among us, and therefore we are learning to take miracle—or mystery—into the human and natural scheme of things. There was a time (before Tyndall) when the crooking of a finger was insignificantly "natural," and witches and wizards meddled at peril of their souls with the supernatural. The meddling was magic (black magic, distinguished thus from holy sorts of miracle-mongering, and regarded as at least as unnatural), the finger-crooking was so natural as to be of no account either one way or another.

Now, in these later days, many of us begin to stand in wonder before every operation of a living man; yet the wizard and the witch are being systematized by calm observers who follow the scientific fashion, and would put angels, if there are angels, into the same class.

Any one may watch benevolent wizards in the hospitals, but the spectators do not as yet always call their work magic, nor do they consider the cures they effect either supernatural or miraculous. That is to say, these marvels are not regarded as marvels by those among us who are easily paid off with words, and accept no "supernature" anywhere. For many of the rest, for those who ring that verbal coinage hard, there is another way of looking at such things and at all things, another way of thinking and of speaking of the natural and supernatural. Why should I not call these men wizards? I see only one reason, and every day the number of men increases

who see only one reason—because all men are wizards and the name distinguishes none. Why should I not speak of angels (if there are angels) as natural? If I do not it is because I know no angels. As soon as I know them I may call them natural, yet I shall still know that they are "supernatural" to the nature of the naturalist of forty years ago. The plain truth is that for modern man whatever is, is natural; but that for many modern men the powers and the promise of men stretch out far beyond the natural of Tyndall's day into the supernatural and miraculous of days long ago. Yet another plain truth is that we are learning fast—very fast in some unlikely-looking places, for instance, in parts of the Roman Catholic Church—to discriminate among miracles and mysteries and powers, and to distinguish that which is from that which is not. Latest of all in our learning, some few of us begin to see mysterious man—that is, natural man—as possessing a prophetic gift; and to recognize in many of those miracles which are not, and never were, his way of uttering true things too high or too profound for common words. We see, in the miracles that did not happen, pictorial symbols of truths too great for man to speak in any other way, truths that he felt, rather than articulately knew, in the depths of his mysterious life; and we perceive that on this account great miracles have come down to us and are ours. The man of the Church has given us besides these certain other symbols made up of words in which he has tried to describe other matters of his prophetic experience; symbols which, although they appeared to Tyndall and the men of the dry

time foolish and arrogant dogmas, some few of us are learning to understand and set in their right symbolic relation. The work of learning and teaching us to do this is being done in unlikely places, like the work about miracles and mysteries. It is, in fact, a Roman Catholic priest—Father Tyrrell—who is teaching us plain men most plainly about it here in England.

Now it should be manifest that the present condition of things with regard to man and miracle and the natural and the supernatural, is a condition favourable to religion among those who are awake to it. The minds of thinking men are or may be receptive to religious ideas; they are, at least, no longer as antagonistic as in Tyndall's time. If a scientific man of his eminence were nowadays to make his proposal about the testing of prayer he would make himself ridiculous among those of his own intellectual rank, and would gain serious attention only in lower strata of society. There, of course, the proposal would still seem very reasonable and common sense. The ideas of the dry time on these subjects have sunk, as ideas usually sink, into the mental mass that is led; but a new set is entering into possession of that which leads.

With all this in my mind yesterday morning, I went to church in London. The church was nearly full, but the only man within my range of vision (other than the officials) wore a green tunic with a white belt, and was being encouraged with pictures very wisely shown him by a gracious young mother. I am old enough to remember that in Tyndall's time men, needing, so they thought, no pictures, went to

church with their womenkind. Now, for the most part they do not, or rather they do not in London and other places where they are free. And when I say men I mean both the leaders and the led. Now, neither the men who know where to find mysteries—the men for whom man is wonderful and a prophet, and nature is full of that which is beyond nature—nor those others who know nothing of the sort, yet are, of course, in the common need of all men, the need of God, go to church.

Why not? There are a hundred answers, a hundred excellent reasons, some few interlinked causes. I believe there is one remedy, and that it is high time to apply it. The remedy is that those in authority in the Church should speak and act in churches and outside them, in books, in conferences, among themselves and to themselves, as though the men were there. At present most clergymen, priests and bishops alike—I say it with all respect for their devoted service—seem obsessed by consideration for that *foi de charbonnier* which they picture to themselves as the faith of their people. Where, in particular cases, they have shaken off their obsession, men begin to go to church and women do not begin to stay away. The whole secret of Mr. Campbell's popular stir, and of the welcome given to the "New Theology," is that a large number of men whose minds are open, and a still larger number of men who are feeling the common need as well as certain widespread hindrances to its satisfaction, are alike able to find in it a sort of theology in which the natural man is taken as supernatural, and mysteries are everywhere;

and to hear the symbolism of dogma and of those miracles that did not happen, ungrudgingly confessed. Does anybody imagine that if Father Tyrrell had a Catholic church to speak in, and were allowed to speak in it as he writes, men would not eagerly go to it? Ought any thinking religious man to be able to doubt whether they would there frequent the sacraments, and express the worship of their hearts and minds, their souls and bodies, through the symbols of their fathers and in spirit and in truth? And ought any man to hold that even if here or there, in few or many instances, the *foi de charbonnier* broke down under such treatment, the end, even of that loss if it be a loss, would not be gain? After all, those whose faith is of that kind, those whose minds are so straitly limited, are either capable or incapable of more. If they are capable they will learn, if they are not they will perhaps suffer, perhaps not suffer. Is their (only possible) suffering to outweigh both the claim of truth, and the actual suffering of those absent brothers of theirs who grow daily in number, and will continue to grow? There is little chance of escape for these from the influences of the time, they have always about them the teachers who are not religious, or who, if they are, do not speak in churches. They learn from our scientific and philosophical teachers lessons they cannot forget; and theology must reckon with such lessons. Are these men to continue to be shut out because in their ignorance they believe, and are almost justified in believing, that only the *foi de charbonnier* has a right place in church? It is monstrous that we

should maintain their ignorance—monstrous, even if it is in large part their own fault; and I think we may fairly ask whether those who have power and place are doing all that might be done to enlighten them. There is much tenderness, much kindly consideration, for those who seem to have all they want from the Church and from its message as it is now being given, for those who seem to need nothing new from the treasure-house of new and old. There is doubtless a not unreasonable fear of hurting the weaker brethren; but meanwhile there is a grievous hurt given to those called strong, and the givers of that hurt either do not know what they are doing, or do not care. Have we not precedent for courage in dealing with such matters? The weak must have been hurt when the law of Moses was corrected by the "But *I* say unto you," that brought in the larger freedom of the Divine Man; and by the bold saying, "He is a Jew which is one inwardly," that foretold his oneness upon earth as it is in heaven. Possibly, let us say probably, some men and more women may be hurt now, if and when our pastors cease to hurt us others; but nevertheless we ask a larger consideration for freedom's sake, the freedom to worship God in spirit and in truth, and in His ancient House and fellowship, and for the sake of the life of the Church.

Do you not think, you who have no chance of seeing, that the return of the thinkers will do more to fortify and sustain the faith of the weaker brethren than all your care? Imagine it, see in your mind's eye your churches half full of men—will the women lose heart and belief because you are giving, as

indeed you must and will, spiritual and intellectual meat as well as milk? And those women, too, are they all deaf and blind to the outside world? Have they no enlarging faith and vision? Perhaps you do not know how many, even of these, are almost driven away by your tender thought for them.

Believe me, the Christian and Catholic *foi de charbonnier* is passing away. Newspapers, clubs, lecturers, free libraries, sixpenny "rationalisms," novels of purpose, drawing-room meetings, fashionable and unfashionable fads and crazes and sects and societies, to say nothing of better influences, are destroying it, at least in its old form. Some day, if you are not minded to change, our churches will be empty; even the women will have deserted them. Take courage, reverend fathers and brothers: God, as you well know, has no more need of irrelevance, however judicious, and of truth-shunning platitudes, however kindly meant, than He has of lies. Give Him, and give us, something to the point, something warm with your own present wonder-working life and ours. Speak, there in our churches, and even in our world, as though we were there, and we shall be there.

Practically, and as a beginning, we venture to ask of you that you find out for yourselves (those of you who do not know) what is going on in our world. Will you, for example, read the answers given by French writers and thinkers, clerical and lay, to questions concerning the conditions of the return of men to the Church, which were sent to them by a layman, Dr. Rifaux?[1] Will you also read sometimes

[1] Rifaux, *Les conditions du retour au Catholicisme.*

The Hibbert Journal, and *Demain*,[1] in addition to your *Guardian* and *Church Times?* Above all, will you find out something of the meaning—no man knows very much of it as yet—of that great upheaval in the Roman Communion, of which Baron Fr. von Hügel, and Father Tyrrell and Fogazzaro, and Père Laberthonnière and the Abbé Loisy are showing us plain signs? When you have done these things you will know, far better than most of us know ourselves, our individual needs and our wants; and this will be as it should be. At present, let me say it with all due consideration of your place and honour, and of your immeasurable devotion and labour, you know less, which is plainly as it should not be and used not to be. How can you continue to be apostles and ministers unless you lead? We ask you to learn once more to lead, as St. Paul led, as St. Augustine led, as Athanasius led, even *contra mundum*. It is the kind of leading which has about it some following —neither you nor any man, nor God, can speak that which we hear unless our ears are already open—but we have called to you this long time now, and you have not—I put it to you—even followed. Take up the burden of your leading; we submit to you that the hour for it is more than come, it is for many of us passing by.

There are some among you who are awake to all this; there are men among you who are making the divine Word and the Sacraments of life really alive for us; but experience of England up and down the

[1] When these words were written *Demain* had not suspended publication.

country gives the impression that they are still in a very small minority, whose influence is not spreading as it should. We want hundreds of pastors and teachers to make clear to us, for instance, the very necessary distinction between the religious and theological statements that are "of faith" because they have roots in the depths of human experience, and stretch out branches and leaves and flowers to the expanding limits of its growth; and those other matters which are products of reflexion, statements of historical testimony, guesses of devout speculation, or interpretations by theological science aided by the philosophy of each particular age, and expressed now in terms of a vanished or vanishing manner of thought. We of the flock find the need of this distinction, or rather, we have for the most part been unable to make it and have turned away from the eternal truths so commingled and disguised in a temporal and passing medium of thought. The customary defence of Christian truths, the accepted apologetic, is to us not so much false as meaningless. That logical structure, standing in the air by itself, unsupported, unrooted, appears to have no application to our concrete human life. It may be true—who knows? It may be false—who cares? The time and place for it have gone by. In no department of human thinking do we any longer see anything of the same kind. The habit of this manner of thinking is gone. We trust no metaphysical scheme; we look upon deductions from any pseudo-realities of such a scheme as we look upon the reasoned phantasy of the lunatic who, convinced

that he is a reigning king, very rationally discusses the asylum as his kingdom, and the rules of the asylum as the enactments of his ministers. "Very clever, very rational, very much to *that* point—but standing in the air. Let us bring it down to the solid ground and see how it looks then."

Those five unnamed priests who wrote a letter to Pius X, which, we may well suppose, has not reached him, speak for tens of thousands who desire to bring not only the traditional apologetic but the traditional theology generally, to the solid ground. Scholastic theology, these five men say, "presented the truths of Christianity in a highly evolved external form determined by their perfectly systematized fusion with the Aristotelian metaphysic, in a form which was represented as absolute and irreducible since the very beginnings of Christianity. But the diligent and accurate study of these truths, based upon the revision of the books of the New Testament and the whole heritage of patristic tradition down to St. Thomas, clearly demonstrates that our theology is but the result of the life of the fundamental dogmas of Christianity as humanity in the different stages of its development has lived them." Dry bones of rationalism on the one side, the living tree of the life of the God-Man on the other — which will the modern man choose for himself? There is no choice for him; the dry bones are dead now, are unmistakably dry bones, unmistakably dead; the life is his own.

So, if he is a religious man and is also a thinking man, either of the scientific kind or touched by the

scientific spirit about him, he demands a New Theology; like these five priests, like Father Tyrrell, like Mr. Campbell of the City Temple, like any number of us plain but thinking and more or less instructed men. We cannot help reflecting on experience, our own and mankind's; therefore, if we are religious we cannot do without something to stand for, and be derived from, a theology, any more than we can do without something to stand for a philosophy. The plainest among us has a sort of philosophy, and he has, or at least he needs, some kind of a substitute for theology, however inchoate and feeble. We seek a theology alive to us, as the dead theology was once to other men. Doubtless the coming theology for which we are looking will some day be dead, and as useless as that which is now dry bones; but so will the scientific theorizing of to-day, and it is none the less valuable. This is the life history of all systematized commentary—to be brought to birth with travail and conflict, to live and make live, to stiffen and to die. But we must give birth to it ever anew, or we are not living, growing, aspiring sons of God; we must interpret the undying truths of religious experience and the teaching of religious experience to our own age, in the terms and after the manner of our own age. Men live—in their poor way—the eternal and fundamental truths of religion, of Christianity, and they live them differently and progressively from age to age, and in this people and condition, or in that; but human life is not only of action, it is of reflexion too, of speculation, of thought-construction; and when those re-

ligious truths which are being lived are brought into relation with the whole of life and with the reflective and speculative aspect of it, they issue in theology. So it is useless to expect us to do without a living theology; our choice lies between one kind and another, less or more inadequate, less or more inspiring and supporting, less or more commendatory of God to men—sometimes become a libel on both God and men. We ask of our pastors, our bishops and our priests, to translate the old theology for us, to make it new. "There is something true and divinely revealed," says Newman, "in every religion all over the earth." There is; and the truths of every religion on earth have a centre of embracing truths in Christianity. No man, we Christians say, can discover a religious truth elsewhere which has not its fitting place there, which does not meet there with that which harmonizes and fulfils it. And all truths are alive, lived imperfectly by men and women in all times and places—they are truths of the God-Man, they are all divinely revealed in man. Should not our teachers be teaching us of these things and in this light? Yet the Church seems in the eyes of many onlookers to be stagnant, and men, within and without, speak of it as a place of fixed attainment, of arrest of effort, of complete awareness or not awareness; not as an ever new and splendid beginning fed by its life and inspired by the Spirit of life. Happily for us all, within and without, there are some divine messengers who are bringing in the riches and powers of the modern world to adorn the living temple of Christ, and repair the

breaches in its walls; and soon they must be not only heard but helped, not only without but within, not only by few but by many.

Is it not time to ask of the officials of the Anglican Communion that they play their due part in the great movement, and that they do so without having that part forced upon them by churches empty except for those who cannot be driven away? Let them, as I have said, speak and act always, even in their own studies and in their reading and their writing, as though the absent men were there; let them cease to cherish the *foi de charbonnier* at the expense of the faith of those others who would worship God with all their mind and all their strength as well as with all their heart. Men will soon be found listening to their words, men will soon be found at home in the use of ancient symbols after the old manner of the imperishable body to which they belong—the ways of which are now rapidly growing more and more foreign and unmeaning to them.

II[1]

The first letter printed in response to the layman's appeal for help in the present distress contains a challenge. Its writer presumes that I "would not accept even the Virgin Birth and the Resurrection as literal facts; they are, forsooth, parables," he says, and he challenges me "to contradict this most painful and disquieting impression."

[1] This article was inserted in *The Church Times* as a letter. I have restored it to its original form.

We have here a significant illustration of the way in which laymen may be alienated if they are capable of being alienated, disheartened if they are not of a confident courage, and dangerously misunderstood. A man, in his humble estate plainly on the side of truth, of faith, and of charity, asks for bread from his ecclesiastical superiors; and a stone is forthwith not given but thrown in his face. Let it be supposed, for the moment, that in the opinion of the inquirer he may rightly be held an unbeliever in these revelations as "literal facts" (according to the meaning of that expression for him who sets the question); is the disposition towards the great things of God that he displays to go for nothing? Are laymen who make appeals for help so many in these days; is the assistance they need so generally at their service; are they so safely held in the grasp of their pastoral guardians; that the first thing in dealing with one of them who makes the needs of his fellows explicit is to take him to task on a question of doctrine with regard to which he is in error? There can hardly be a better way than this to quench the smoking flax of churchmanship.

Again, let it be supposed on the other hand that in the given case this layman believes in the Resurrection and the Virgin Birth, as that whole-hearted Catholic, M. Edouard Le Roy, believes and has set forth in his *Dogme et Critique*, what can he say to an inquirer who puts "literal facts" and "parables" before him after the manner of a dilemma and challenges him to remove the "painful and disquieting impression" of his being impaled upon the latter

horn rather than upon the former? He is not touched by either of these horns, much less impaled; but what can he say? He can only ask his interlocutor to consider carefully what meaning is likely to be attached by a man of his training and intellectual presuppositions to the expression "literal facts," and beg him to state once more, after the necessary consideration (which will not be effected in a day, or even in a year), the question he desires to put as a "challenge." This, in fact, is what I personally must do; I have no way of meeting the dilemma, because by its character it is unable to come into real contact with my thought. But I am grateful to my challenger. He illustrates and emphasizes the need for the great missionary effort to which the Church, in both her lay and her clerical members, is called, and which she must make if the modern world is not to become more and more widely separated from her in language, in method, in everything, perhaps, except living direction and aim—which are far more common to both than either the world or the Church is in the habit of thinking.

Let us call to mind that in the immeasurable and irresistible marvel we call the process of civilization, the Church is only one, although a central, a divinely expansive, and a sublime element. Let us consider, then, the dangerous condition of that element, dangerous for the world and, temporally, for itself, if it loses touch with other elements working out the divine will and purpose and moving towards the realization of the common aim. It may be that here in England we are narrowed in our view, cramped in

our sympathies, and of a short-sighted outlook, in consequence of our protective insularity, both geographical and ecclesiastical. It is possible, too, that we are somewhat provincial in our manner of considering even our own affairs. There must be something of the sort to help to account for the fact that it is not chiefly the sons of Canterbury and York, but the sons of Rome, who are awake to the danger and the needs of the modern world and of the Church in face of the modern world.

I have before me to-day the full text of Mr. Lilley's translation of "An Open Letter to Pius X from a Group of Priests," entitled "What We Want,"[1] which may, perhaps, do something to stir our hearts and minds, and open out our sympathies and perceptions. These men point out that even the disposition towards God, which is in many places one of the consequences of our recognition of the work of science as only descriptive and not revealing, is not bringing men to the Church.

"It is true," they say, "that the mind feels itself impelled to seek, beyond the sensible world, something infinitely great and incommensurable, which many are satisfied to call the Unknowable, while many others, seeking it in themselves, and in themselves finding it as an inexpressible reality which directs their life in a gradual upward movement towards the good and the true, call it God. But even this new attitude of mind is not very favourable to us. For, even when the need of the existence of a supernatural and Divine world, and of getting into

[1] Murray, 1907.

personal communion with it, is felt, all the other questions of the religious problem must be solved by means of historical and psychological research, the method of which remains hitherto unknown to our apologetic. It is on this account that that apologetic no longer satisfies men's souls, and has lost the power of revealing to them the attraction of the Christian life."

* * * * * *

"And so in these later years," the writers go on in another section, "there has been on our part an intense and wide-reaching labour of research, philological, historical, psychological, into all the materials furnished by the memorials of the religious life of humanity. Already the fruits of this research are beginning to appear, and the history of religious experience is revealing itself in modern apologetic in a dazzling light, as clear as it is new. While the essential elements of this experience remain unchanged, new aspects of it, formerly unknown to apologetic, which had examined it only through the lens of the Aristotelian philosophy, have been brought to light."

In another part of the letter, the writers point out that such change in apologetic is apostolic in principle, and has been the method of the Church "from the moment of [Christ's] death to the Council of Jerusalem; from the time when Paul, after having boldly resisted Peter and overcome the wiles of the false zealots, launched himself upon the conquest of the Hellenic world, to the moment when Christianity had to struggle against and overcome the Gnostic currents, drawing from them a copious wealth of

belief which it idealized and purified; and so on to the development, and the rational and careful systematization which culminated with St. Thomas." And so they see, these Roman priests, a path, as they say, traced for them by the Fathers and Doctors, in following which the Church may once more gather to herself and into her common life of faith and hope and charity the modern world "which is so ardently aspiring after the Divine," and induce it to accept the whole treasure of Christian truths by adapting (not them but) the apologetic presentation of them "to its historical and psychological habit of mind, as formerly they were adapted to a metaphysical habit of mind."

This, indeed, is what men seem to want and to need, at least as far as the intellectual treatment of revelation goes—which is the matter in question for this discussion. They do not ask—I do not ask—for philosophical sermons, for critical argument, in the pulpit. We all ask only that the Church shall once more exercise her gifts of comprehension and of tongues, and speak to us in a language that is our own, with understanding of our mental presuppositions, of our questions and our answers, our belief and unbelief. Without this we must become more and more estranged, more and more misunderstood and misunderstanding. A difference in use of language, and a difference in presuppositions, together build up a barrier very difficult to pass. Let us suppose a case of attempted passage that will come home to us all; let us suppose that one of those Jews who asked incredulously and with horror, "How can this

man give us his flesh to eat?" is enabled to discuss the question with some scholastic theologian—say, a Jesuit of the eighteenth century, and asks him, as my interlocutor asks me (about the Resurrection and the Virgin Birth), whether he believes as a literal fact that he feeds upon the flesh of Christ, and that the Sacramental Host is the Body of Christ. Can the theologian answer with a mere "Yes" or "No," and yet convey to the Jew the truth of the matter as he sees it? Obviously he cannot; between the two men stands the barrier of a language used in two different ways, and two different sets of intellectual presuppositions. The presuppositions of the Jesuit have been attained, and those of the Jew made impossible for him, through the labour and research and conflict of many generations of men; this work is not to be escaped by a mere "yes" or "no," its outcome cannot so easily be laid hold of or passed on. Were the Jew a Christian of the same period there would be, in spite of all this, a common meeting-ground, as there is for all Christians in all times. The primitive Christian would have different intellectual presuppositions from those of the Jesuit, but he would have the same faith, the same sacramental experiences, and he would have what we may call the symbolic habit of life which comes of penetrating in the spirit of Christ through the outward to the inward of things and passing from the letter to the spirit. He would not have the Jesuit's theory of religious experience; he would know nothing of the scholastic substance and accidents; but he would speak (let us say) as St. Paul speaks, and there would

be communion between those two. There would be a brotherly understanding as long as the Jesuit kept his deductive intellectual work out of sight, and as far as possible out of mind. On the common ground of the experience of divine things we Christians are all at one; it is only when we come, knowingly or unknowingly, to our philosophizing or theologizing that we differ; and, I may add, that we become either partly intelligible or wholly unintelligible to our fellows who are not Christians, according to the amount of intellectual presupposition we have in agreement with theirs. The *depositum fidei* is common to all Christians, or should be; and it comes home to us in the life of each as it is lived in the body to which we belong, the body that bears our common witness to the living truth and is its custodian along the ages.

But when men begin to talk about "literal facts" in a spirit other than that of religious life and experience; when they ask intellectual questions either from without, like my Jew, or from within, like my challenger, concerning a man's intellectual attitude towards doctrines, the difficulty of intellectual language and presuppositions has to be reckoned with. Let us take another case as an example; let us suppose that a theologian of the fifth century has an opportunity to ask my challenger whether he believes in the descent of Christ into Hell and His ascension into Heaven as "literal facts," what answer will he give? If he asks him also whether he believes in the resurrection of his own body as a "literal fact," what will he say? There can be no doubt about it—the

literal facts of these two men are not the same literal facts in their two intellectual ways of seeing them; they are the same only in their vital connexion with religious experience, as divine-human facts, facts of revealed truth made known in and to the whole man, significant in the same way in and for them both in their divine-human life. Behind the literal facts of ascension and descent as they severally exist in the respective minds of the theologian of the fifth century and the clergyman of the twentieth (whether theologian or not), are two different cosmogonies, two different philosophies, and a difference almost as between no science and a highly organized science of physical nature. How can their language be the same? Or rather, how can they use one language in one and the same sense? They cannot; except in relation to their living experience of revealed and eternal truths, which are the unchanging subject-matter (as Father Tyrrell says) of theology, and the common heritage of all Christian men.

Let me not be misunderstood; the layman's appeal is not for such help as one theologian may give to another theologian, or one philosopher to another philosopher. I am not so blind to our blindness as to think that the thousands of intelligent laymen who should go to church and do not are even cursorily acquainted with the real grounds of their own intellectual alienation, much less am I likely to think that any considerable number of them could state those grounds intelligibly even if they are in some vague manner aware of what they are. I am convinced that most of us are ignorant and blind; that

we are so ignorant and blind, for the most part, as to think that our disbelief in the "literal facts" of doctrine, as we suppose them to be authoritatively presented to us, rightly and reasonably involves our rejection of the Christian religion. We—that is, not I, but most of us—who do not believe in the descent into Hell, the ascension into Heaven, the Resurrection, and the Virgin-birth, or the resurrection of our own bodies, as such literal facts, are quite sure that in consequence of this the Christian religion is discredited and disproved. Blindly, unconsciously, the presuppositions of our leaders in science, in philosophy, in criticism, have become our presuppositions; we see no meaning and no sense in an apologetic based on metaphysics, and we know nothing of one that arises out of the modern study of history and psychology and not only speaks in a language we can understand, but appeals to that which we already know and possess in ourselves as its own witness. When laymen in this condition meet with or are taught by pastors in the same state of ignorance but possessed of a different set of presuppositions, the blind meet with the blind and both fall into a ditch, these on one side of the barrier, those on the other. It is necessary, if the teachers are to teach, the pastors to guide, that they should understand the conditions under which they must work. It is not necessary that they should discuss these conditions with their flock in general, as they would in a school of apologetics; it is not necessary to administer homœopathic doses of science, or scientific theology, or philosophy. The teachers should be in possession

of a knowledge of the troubles and difficulties special to the times, as they are made explicit by those men, clerical or lay, who are leaders of thought and are giving utterance to the dumb and formless mass which they are gradually shaping and bringing to coherence and articulate life. I am asking only, we are asking only, for a truly apostolic missionary work. The Fathers in face of the Hellenic world, the Doctors bringing in the formerly condemned Aristotle to the service of the Church, were carrying on the work of St. John and St. Paul, as we ask that you, reverend fathers, will carry it on. We are not suggesting that you "water down" the faith; we are not hoping that you will abandon some of the treasures of the Church to lighten the burden of difficulty for the world as it is now; we would not have you lower the standard of its moral and spiritual demands upon men. We ask you rather to emphasize all these, and once more to conquer the world with them. And I, the layman of the Anglican Communion, ask you to study what men of the Roman Communion are doing, in order that you may know how to meet the difficulties and overcome the disabilities from which our insularity and our isolation either cannot protect us, or will not long continue to protect us. If there is a modern apologetic, shaped or being shaped ready to your hands, an apologetic in which "the history of religious experience is revealing itself in a dazzling light, as clear as it is new," will you not hasten, reverend fathers, to present its fruits before the eyes of the men of England?

WM. SCOTT PALMER.

Part I

"MODERNISM" AND THE TEACHING AND AUTHORITY OF THE CHURCH

THE SYMBOLISM OF DOGMA AND OF THE CHURCH

THE transformation of the manner in which the faith of the Church is presented is a process which has never ceased, a natural process which has gone on so continuously as to be for the most part overlooked. When the process comes to be openly discussed, when the symbolic character of the words and rites in which the faith is expressed becomes a matter for controversy, there is alarm and consternation on one side, but there is, or should be, reassurance to fidelity on the other. In M. Hébert's able and conscientious book, *L'Evolution de la Foi Catholique*, we have an example of a sustained and reasoned effort to strengthen alarm by one who is no longer alarmed, and to neutralize the reassurance of the faithful. M. Hébert brings the whole question to a head :—

"Chaque jour plus étroitement," he says, "le dogme catholique se trouve serré entre ces deux branches d'un étau : la pensée philosophique et la critique historique. Qu'il y soit brisé, c'est incontestable. Seulement, il y avait, jusqu'à ces derniers temps, jusqu'à la condamnation de Loisy, une échappatoire. Il est brisé, disait-on, dans sa forme autoritaire et barbare, mais son essence s'en dégage plus pure et plus active."

"De là, cette conception si répandue de nos jours, si séduisante—pure équivoque et illusion d'ailleurs (non au point de vue humain, mais au point de vue catholique)—du *symbolisme* des dogmes. Auguste Sabatier et Alfred Loisy en sont les réprésentants, dans l'Église protestante et dans l'Église catholique. Tous deux ont vu dans les dogmes les constructions de la foi, de l'imagination créatrice, symbolisant nos tendances, aspirations, sentiments moraux, métaphysiques et religieux. Leurs ouvrages ont été condamnés à Rome et c'était inévitable. Rome ne pouvait se suicider en les acceptant et approuvant alors que sa doctrine est tout à l'opposite." [1]

Again we are told "*Roma locuta est, causa finita est*"; but this time the fact is pressed upon us by an opponent of Rome who sees that what she says is contradictory of a truth by which some of the faithful sons of Rome are seeking to be set free—an opponent who would have them free themselves in another way. M. Hébert would have them, in fact, throw aside another truth which he has come to think a lie. And in the matter of the conception—"si séduisante"—of the symbolism of dogma he is surely taking a dangerously narrow view; he is failing to perceive that not only the dogma of the Church but the Church itself is a symbol, and that both are capable of undergoing exterior transformation while still presenting the same interior truth. He says that he finds the conception of dogma as symbolic equivocal and illusory, but only as he looks at it in the Roman point of view; in the "human"

[1] *L'Evolution de la Foi Catholique*, pp. 164–5.

point of view he finds it quite otherwise. But this is because he is looking at the Church in the narrowest of Roman points of view; and we have a right to remind him of its symbolic character, of its sacramental and mystical meaning, or at least of the significance of belief in it as possessing this character and meaning. To him and to all other men of his way of thinking, who are deserting the Church and are endeavouring to prove to such men as the Abbé Loisy, Baron Fr. von Hügel, Signor Fogazzaro, Father Tyrrell, Monsieur Edouard Le Roy, and many more that they are mistaken in their trust in her and in their hope of her future, we must repeat that this view is too narrow. The deserters and opponents are, for the time, blind to certain great facts and great principles. The faithful sons of the Church are faithful because they have a far-seeing outlook for the Church; it is this that enables them to hold to the splendid conception of it as the Body of the God-Man, and keeps them steadfast in the effort to realize in the Church "the ideal of a spiritually united humanity centred round Christ in one divine society—of the Kingdom of God governed by the Son of God; . . . that perfect all-embracing religious association which as a mediating instrument should secure the fullest and freest commerce between its several members and the whole; that is, between the Soul and God."[1]

M. Hébert foretells disappointment for the Catholics of the school of the Abbé Loisy who, like him, are faithful to the Church and believe in her vitality

[1] Tyrrell, *A Much-Abused Letter*, p. 77.

and permanence. He says that this attitude exposes those who adopt, or rather maintain, it to insurmountable difficulties, because, as he urges, the view of the ecclesiastical authority in regard to the doctrine concerning itself which is supported by M. Loisy is clearly shown by repeated condemnations of it, and the Church cannot, in self-defence, admit that its authority should be set forth as merely providential and not as miraculous and supernatural in the official and scholastically theological sense of miracle and supernature. M. Hébert here shows himself as the Positivist champion of an ecclesiasticism which would ensure the eventual destruction and disappearance of the Church. It is not to his interest as a controversialist, nor is it consistent with his new convictions as a believer in Humanity triumphant over Christianity, to admit that the Church contains within herself a power of reform, a power to retrace wandering steps, a power to disavow old errors and to bring forth from her treasures not only old and obscured truths but some that may at least appear to be new. He does not believe it; he sees the authority of the Church as it stands and just now proclaims itself, and he takes for gospel what it says at this passing moment of its long and significant history. Better so—I suppose he feels—the soonest ended soonest mended. And there are many like him, who, although less able and less powerful in verbal expression, are equally sure that the soul of the Church cannot lead its governors and servants in the way of truth and righteousness and peace. At the bottom of his argument lies the question of the Church's doctrine of the

supernatural, as it is just now being professed by most of the men in high place; at the bottom of the reformers' argument lie both a profounder doctrine and pertinent questions concerning the course of development and the origin and credentials of the temporarily official and scholastic doctrine, questions involving a discussion of its right to permanence, of the possibility, the probability, the necessity, of its correction. For M. Hébert the Church is irrevocably pledged to error; but for the liberal Catholics error is a continually passing incident in the life of the corporate preserver and manifestation of truth; and is due to the ignorance, the fallibility, and the sin of men, and not least of the present-day theologians whom M. Hébert regards as holding the key of the situation. But why appeal to the theologians, asks Father Tyrrell, when we accuse the theologians? We declare that it is they who are at fault, shall we abide by their decision? Shall we condemn the Church on their account while we insist that they misrepresent the Church?

M. Hébert's cause is well served by such an attitude; not so the cause of Christianity. M. Hébert says that Loisy, like Sabatier, has displayed a *historical law* of the evolution of dogma, but has not displayed a theological dogma; and he says that "jamais, au grand jamais" will there be deduced from it "cette infaillibilité, ce droit de s'imposer *exclusivement* à *toute* conscience que s'arroge l'Église catholique." He adds that the Church proves this to be true by her condemnation of the writings of M. Loisy; and he evidently thinks that no other course is possible and

that the Church is essentially and irrevocably what theologians and cardinals and popes have made her to seem by their manner of expressing their authority. But if she is in reality ruled by Christ and inspired by His Spirit she is determined ultimately not from the seats of those who are set to express her authority, but from her common life, the life of the whole Body. In this common inspired life lies her power, from this the finally irresistible voice is speaking, and it will speak until it compels formulating utterances from the organs of authority. M. Hébert seems to forget that the Pope is *Servus servorum Dei,* but he is justified; other men have forgotten it too, and not least those who most needed to bear it in mind.

It is not surprising that M. Hébert despairs of the Church and has left her. He does not believe in her essential doctrines; he does not believe in Her Head and in Her Spirit. He really has no reason for hope. But to those who have, to those who see behind the visible Church the invisible, "with angels and archangels and all the company of heaven," depression may be brought, but never conclusive discouragement, by declarations from the Chair of Peter. The Chair of Peter is, when all is said and done, the Chair of one man after another who is, and must learn to show himself once more, the servant of the servants of God; and the Catholic Church is still capable of internal transformation as she was of old, and still capable of making known the mind of the Spirit of God.

The practical alternative seems to faithful Catholics a religion of more or less tempered individualism,

and although they cannot and do not deny that the governors of the Catholic Church, in their misguided efforts to suppress individualism, have ended in a sustained and systematic attempt to suppress our divine-human freedom, yet they hold that the Church remains, and will ever remain, the chief witness before men of the will of Love, the supreme earthly expression, the one resplendent earthly symbol, of the Brotherhood of Divine Sons who are in living relationship with the Father of all. And we of the Church in England who look on at their faithful struggle with the forces arrayed against them can hardly fail to share their hope and their faith. Individualism may be a City of Refuge; it is difficult to believe that it can become, either on earth or elsewhere, the City of God. And if the great Catholic symbol of our brotherhood in the divine life has, like lesser symbols, ceased in some measure to express the truth for which it stands, the seat and the scope of its failure are easy to find. The symbol is not outworn—it is indeed one of the very simplest and most enduring kind—and its truth is inherent in itself. It is not an artifice, it is not a convention; it is, in fact, a sacrament. It conveys that which it represents; it is that for which it stands; and Christian men cannot in the long run do without it. There is no substitute for an organized body. If the body is diseased it should be cured, if it is wounded, healed; if it is misguided the members that are leading it astray should be corrected. The living symbol, in fact, which is that which it expresses, which conveys that which it represents, may well

need to be improved; it cannot be done away with except by a kind of suicide. An organized body is something more than the sum of its members, and to disorganize the body is to rob the members of their full portion of life.

M. Hébert is hopeless with regard to this great symbolic institution, the Catholic Church, because he will not believe that the ecclesiastical organs of the Church's government are not practically and effectively the Church; he does not see that in the future, as in the past, those organs will be unable in the long run to override the whole body and go counter to the determinations of its mind. To M. Hébert or to any other man of similar opinions, as to every depressed but still patient member of the Church, Father Tyrrell is saying in his "much-abused letter" to the unnamed Professor of Anthropology:—

"Let us then clear our mind of illusion and recognize that . . . this self-conscious, self-formulating Catholicism of the thinking, talking and governing minority is not the whole Church, but only an element (however important) in its constitution. Is it not because you forget this that the prospect seems so hopeless? Is it not because you are looking forward to the necessary developments of the ideas and principles of formulated and organized Catholicism and taking no account of the inscrutable voiceless life which it strives feebly to formulate, of the eternal truths, the Divine instincts that work themselves out irresistibly in the heart of the whole people of God?"[1]

[1] Tyrrell, *A Much-Abused Letter*, p. 59.

M. Hébert himself points out that the conception of symbolism shows us how the "natural" faith of the human mind constructs the "supernatural" faith, and also enables us to understand why the disappearance of a dogmatic and despotic form of the faith does not involve in any way the ruin of its "natural" and spontaneous form. He says it reminds us that new forms should answer to the same aspirations and to the same psychological needs once fully satisfied by the dogmatic faith. He declares that it is not in virtue of the literal sense of Christian dogma, but rather because humanity has "incarnated" in them its highest aspirations, that they have exercised over us such "profound moral suggestion." Perfection appears to us men, he says, as an ideal, the law of being in its evolution ; every individual has in himself an interior and inexhaustible principle of perfection, of the marvellous creation of the best ; and he regards this as constituting the dignity of human nature and inspiring us with respect for it. When it is liberated from "the monarchical form," this feeling of the perfect, so he thinks, binds us (*relie*) no less than before to "the universal evolution," and thus to "something superior to our individual existence" ; it *binds* us to other men—organs, like ourselves, of progress ; and, so he holds, we may thus learn the true signification of the word *religion*—of the religion of the future as he discerns it.

Plainly M. Hébert is no individualist, nor does he fail to perceive something of the wonders of Man, and of the mysterious powers inherent in him and

conveyed to him. But he is convinced that the governing element in the Church is, and will be, both obstinate and supreme; he despairs of it, and, moreover, he rejects as myths no longer intelligible the conception of God and Christ, for which he substitutes abstractions, psychological occurrences, or generalizations. He believes in a whole of which men are parts as well as in men, he believes in the whole he calls humanity; but he tells the liberal Catholics that instead of wasting their time in galvanizing old formulas and an ancient institution, they would do better to aid the "eternal human consciousness" to create for itself simpler and more effective expression. M. Hébert has succumbed to one of the greatest temptations that beset intellectual discerners of the spiritual nature of man. Abstractions, generalizations, and scientific statements of psychological occurrence, which seem to him sufficiently expressive of those truths, are neither simpler, nor truer, and are much less effective than the great and expansive symbols of the Christian faith that have stood the test of generation after generation. These, in their profundity, have served men through innumerable changes, and may continue to serve them when the positivist and his creed have joined in the triumph of the City of God. Humanity would be hard put to it to organize its corporate existence without such conceptions, but we may allow, and indeed claim, that the Church of Christ, living and corporate though it be, nevertheless, and, indeed, in consequence of that character, not only needs revision and may undergo beneficial

change but in certain respects must be transformed. We may gladly confess that the government of the Church calls for something not far short of reconstruction; but we have good reason for asking M. Hébert and those who share his opinions why they must needs set to build wholly anew, why they are so hopeless of humanity when it is Christian and Catholic, so confident in it when it is not? We know our own comment, and the comment of such men as M. Loisy on this question. We believe that we have an advantage over our critics in that the truth of the conceptions of "God" and "Christ" is for us ill-expressed by any naturalistic or scientific terms. We, on our part, cannot keep our hold upon the great truths of man unless in our religion we bind men, not only with men, but with all the life that overpasses theirs. M. Hébert confines his outlook to humanity, we pass beyond it; and because we pass beyond it, we have grounds for hope and faith and love in regard to the Church, which he cannot have. But if we confine our outlook, for the sake of argument, as straitly as he confines his, there seems reason to question his final contention in this matter of the old and new. Even if the world should come to something like agreement about the need for building a world-wide organization, it would not be built without enormous difficulty. When the world is immeasurably far from such agreement what prospect is there of organization?

To the observer of the present state of things it seems that Catholic Christendom stands in face of a choice between the organized Catholic Society—the

Catholic Church—on the one hand, and individualistic disintegration on the other. Groups of irreconcilable men may be formed, such as the Positivists, the Protestants, or what not; but there seems no prospect whatever of a great movement towards unity and the formation of a social and religious body comparable with the Church. The schisms of the past are not likely to be imitated; moreover, the result of those schisms has shown that only by maintaining what is variously called either a close copy or a continuation of the old structure of the Church are corporate life and unity among the members of the severed parts possible even in a less degree, and for the comparatively short time of at most a few hundred years. There is little encouragement to schism in this, but there is a lesson. Humanity with its "internal and inexhaustible principle of perfection" will do well to pause before it despairs of its own work in the past, even if for the moment it is given up to the delusion that its own work is solely its own, and that God and Christ have no part in it. Let it endeavour to reform—that is good, only good; but let it cease to preach destruction. This latter indeed is waste of time; but the work of the liberal Catholics in all ranks and places of the Church, sons of the Church who love her, believe in her, and hope for her, is far from being waste of time; it is surely, if very slowly and under great difficulties, effecting just that transformation of symbolism, both of dogma and of the Church, which is necessary for the continuous healthy life of the great body of faithful Christian men. The so-called "symbolists" are

working towards a real consensus of contribution and value. The scholars, such as the Abbé Loisy, are bringing science to bear upon matters of science; they are doing for the dogmas which involve matters of historical happening what will make the consensus of Christians once more of value to themselves and all other men of good will; and they are transforming the symbolic expression of certain truths in conformity with the transformation which has taken place in our manner of seeing and expressing all known truth of every kind. They are commending before men the ways of God with men; they are even opening up a way to the unity of Christendom, and to the healing of the schismatic wounds of the Church which have done so much to retard its progress and to keep it in a condition of weak foreshadowing and almost unfulfilled promise of that which it should be. But beyond and including these men is the great Church itself, wherein a multitude of men are always rediscovering the divine secrets of mankind. As it is now, so it was and will be evermore. The divine secrets of mankind, the essential truths of faith and morals, are great and deep, and the men of good will know of them and grow to know them more and more. Not all men of good will are equally possessed of these truths, not all men see the same degree of light; among these experts of the spiritual life are some who may be called experts in chief. These have "the mind of Christ" in greater fulness, these know more of the precious things of God and man. But all are experts in their degree; all are organs of humanity in this common

work of life. The notable feature of this work as contrasted with all the other works of men—scientific, political, historical, or what not—is that every man who is in the way to the fulfilment of himself and the divine purpose for him, is, in his degree, an expert—he is an organ of humanity in matters of faith and morals. Faith and morals are the business of us all; science is not, history is not, literary criticism is not. There are special ages of science, there are epochs of historical acquisition, of critical development; but the faith of man and the morals of man, the encounter of the divine Spirit with the spirit of man, the meeting of hearts and the outflow of conjoining love, are not affairs of any age or epoch; they are from everlasting to everlasting with life itself.

So it comes about that concerning these greatest things even a provisional consensus of a Church which is a mere dim foreshadowing of the great and splendid Body of the God-Man as it will be, may rightly claim authority over us, and may receive from us a consent which is not of mere blind submission or acceptance, but of reasonable obedience and of contribution in our order and our degree. The contributory consent of the sinner who is also a saint is of one order, the contributory consent of the other sinner who may be only just beginning to turn away from his sins, is of a different kind; but each in his order and degree may verify that which is guaranteed and commended to him by the general consent of the body to which he belongs.

There is no lack of religious men, saints and

sinners, at the present time. We are told that the prospects of religion in Europe were never so bright, but on the other hand we are told that those of the Church were never so dark. The man who has eyes to see and is not deceived by words must see a gradual but marked infusion—inspiration some would say—of the religious spirit into secular affairs, manifest in the minds and performances of men. The sense of brotherhood grows, the sense of mutual obligation grows, the bonds between man and man, and between people and people, are being drawn closer. Brotherhood and bonds of alliance are of the essence of religion; by whatever names we may call them, they are affairs of the Spirit of Love; and so when we hear men speak of duties where once they spoke of rights, and sometimes speak even of love in the radiant sense which is divine, then, however firmly they may repudiate religion, we know that those men possess it. They may call themselves Agnostics or Freethinkers; more often than not they call themselves by no name; but they are of the divine family of Christian men; they are conjoined with God, and in them His Incarnation is extending. They are religious, and they show us how religion grows among us. So we agree as to the brightness of the prospect of religion, but with regard to the darkness of the Church's outlook we must not agree. Its outlook has, in fact, very often been much darker than it is now; its hours of apparent triumph have been often in reality hours of far more persistent obscuring of light. Now, light is beginning to overcome the darkness, fitfully it may be, and only here

and there; but any man may see it if he will, and see too, unless he wills not to see, that the effort to hide it will be fruitless in the end—and perhaps before very long as the Church reckons time and her history. There are in the Church principles making for a true growth in the divine-human manner, and they will assuredly burst the hardened husks which are cramping them now. In Newman's *Essay on Development* there is an extract from Bellarmine, of which the significance is plainer now than it was when Newman wrote, plainer than it was, doubtless, to him, for whom the infallibility of the apostles was a premiss not to be disputed. This is what Bellarmine says:—

"All Catholics and heretics agree . . . that it is possible for the Pope, even as pope, and with his own assembly of councillors, or with General Council, to err in particular controversies of fact, which chiefly depend on human information and testimony."

If Bellarmine and Newman are right there is even a theological principle in the Church which will make easier its embrace of that which is brought to it by the expert men who have a right to know; and the effort of Leo XIII, in his Encyclical *Providentissimus Deus*, to make the distinction between matters of faith and morals and matters of science in this respect of no avail, will in the end be counteracted. The conflict between the liberal Catholics and their ecclesiastical governors turns very importantly in regard to authoritative decisions upon this point, and upon its relation to the essentially temporary character of the deductive work of theologians and of their commentary on the truths possessed by the Church.

Thousands of men of the best blood of the Church are alienated for the present by the refusal of their governors to recognize in practice this Catholic principle stated by Bellarmine and approved by Newman; but in their alienation they are in some considerable degree helping forward their own cause and the cause of us who are watching and sympathizing with them; they are bringing nearer a time when not only the weaker brethren but the strong will receive from the servants of the servants of God the tender care which is their due. To proclaim that the whole organized government of the Church has erred in matters of history and science, and that theologians frequently miss their way, may temporarily shake the confidence of some, but to persist in acting as though the Church never has erred, and never could err, either in theology or in relation to scientific or historical statements, is to cut off great and growing numbers of men who would, if they remained, strengthen those who are weak and serve as the most powerful witnesses to enduring Christian truth.

It is this state of things which is mistaken for the obscuration of the Church. It is not obscuration, it is merely resistance to the result of enlightening. The life of the Church is active, stirring; and nothing will be able finally to resist the power of its life. The promise of the future lies with those liberal Catholics who are faithful but inexorable. It is impossible, as Loisy remarks, to kill an idea; and the dominant idea of these men is one of freedom for light and life, the light and the life of the Church.

The Church is not bounded, it is not even ulti-

mately controlled, by the organized government; it is controlled in the long run by the great Body at large which that organized government is commissioned to serve and not to dominate. Belief in this fact, based as it is upon a more far-reaching belief in a bond never to be broken between God and Man, gives strength to the case of the Abbé Loisy and his friends, and constitutes at once an explanation and a condemnation of the position of M. Hébert and the attitude and actions of the ecclesiastical authorities at Rome.

CATHOLICISM AND ROMAN AUTHORITY

BARON FRIEDRICH VON HÜGEL, in his remarkable and important letter on "The Papal Commission and the Pentateuch," [1] lays stress on four considerations which, he says, are working in spite of all appearance to the contrary "towards the final acceptance, however slow and cautious, of a consistent and sincere historico-critical method for the Bible" by the authorities of the Roman Catholic Church. The application of these considerations is not confined either to the Roman Church or to the Bible; it extends on the one hand to the whole body of Christian men, and on the other to the relation of spiritual truth with all outward happenings. Nevertheless there are Christian men outside the Roman Communion who may not easily see that they themselves are intimately concerned with these considerations, although a more profound examination into the roots of their faith might possibly bring them to acknowledge this fact which time will surely prove. Baron von Hügel's statement of the four important points may be condensed as follows :—

First, that Catholicism "is essentially not a simple Illuminism or Fideism," but is "a Religion which, in its completeness, is simultaneously Historical and

[1] "The Papal Commission and the Pentateuch." Briggs and von Hügel.

Institutional, Critical and Speculative, Mystical and Operative"; second, that it "is essentially a missionary, an aggressively universalistic religion"; third, that it "is essentially a 'Church and Bible,' not a 'Bible only' religion"; and, fourth, that it "is essentially a life and an organism that has grown and is growing." In other words, Catholicism, as Baron von Hügel sees it, is a religion for all men and for the whole of every man in every relation, state, and activity of his life. When Catholicism is stated in this way it becomes obvious that the Catholic Church *must* in longer or shorter course of time accept, as he says, "a consistent and sincere historico-critical method," as it must accept, however slowly, every good thing known to men. And it is hard to see how this statement of what Catholicism is can be seriously controverted; before our eyes it "is essentially" all the things that Baron von Hügel says it is,—historical and institutional, critical and speculative, mystical and operative, universalistic, corporate, living and growing; even its failures, great in proportion to the greatness of its sphere and its relations, cannot hide from us its essential character and meaning. But is not this the character and meaning suggested as that of the body of Christians by any fairly adequate idea of Christianity? Moreover, is not an individualistic Christian a contradiction in terms, an absurdity? And if a Christian is and must be of the universalistic body of Christ, must he not, in and with that body, and under its conditions, be helped to live and grow as a whole man in all relations? Individual and corporate life, in-

dividual and corporate growth, wholeness, universality —these are notes of Christianity; and they demand provision for a oneness through all diversity which some Christians are content not to seek, not to desire, not to work for. The duty and the privilege of union among brethren is unrecognized by them, its special graces are ignored or contemned; while the other graces, those of the individual man in his apparent, but always incomplete, isolation are held to be not only sufficient and supreme, but sufficiently provided for in a state of disunion.

Illuminism, or else simple fideism, is thought by different extreme men to be the whole of religion, and even the more moderate are content with aggregation in small groups of almost self-sufficing individuals. At bottom, and looked at philosophically, this is an attempt at exclusion of life, an endeavour to abstract a living part from the whole of which it is a part; and the only reason that it does not always issue in spiritual disaster proportioned to the degree of outward separation is that in the man of good will the endeavour always fails. It is not good for man to be alone, and, happily for us all, the only thing that really makes him to be alone is the perverted will that, stone by stone, builds the solitude of hell about him. Still, any degree of individualism or segregation in religion has its cramping and dwarfing effect, and with regard to all degrees we may safely say that they are just and justified only when they are accepted as alternatives to a worse evil, alternatives to be lamented and to be borne only because, for the present, they must be borne. It is every man's duty

to seek after mystical and spiritual, intellectual and affectional oneness with his brothers, while they are outwardly divided from him; and this, whatever be the cause of the division, and however positively he may think himself right and his brother wrong in the matters that divide. The ideal of Christ always remains—oneness in difference after the divine manner—and it becomes our own ideal and the object of our practical desire in the degree that Christ becomes not only our ideal and the object of desire, but the power working in our practical life and the light in our minds. Scientifically, philosophically, and in religion—which is, above all things, *binding*—each of us has an individual oneness, but each also shares in greater or less degree the common life of corporate and growing unity; we are each potentially or actually one with every other, each and all one with God. Separation may at times be unavoidable, but it is always to be deplored, always to be wept over as the Hebrews wept in Babylon over their exile from the City of God. When we take this view we are driven to look around us and upon the world, and to ask how the visible Home and City of us all is to be constituted. We ask which of the religious institutions of Christendom must be the centre of our hopes, and where, when the corporate life we share has grown into greater cohesion and universality, we are to look for a rallying-ground of our widespread forces. There can hardly be more than one answer to our questions on the part of Catholic-minded men—there is, indeed, no necessity to answer them at all. Dr. Briggs, the

eminent Biblical scholar, formerly a Presbyterian, now of the American Episcopal Church, in his letter to Baron von Hügel is speaking for very many of us when he displays his own profound disappointment with the declaration of the Roman Biblical Commission in the matter of the Pentateuch, and at the same time shows that he deplores it chiefly in its relation to the deeper matter he has at heart, the Reunion of Christendom. He says that he "understood on the highest authority and from conversation with the Pope himself, that he was . . . earnest in his purpose to reform the Church and to do what he could for the reunion of the Protestant Churches with Rome." "It would be a great grief to me," he adds, "and it would dash many hopes to the ground, if it should appear that I have been mistaken, and that I have misled others also." Baron von Hügel, in his reply, speaks of Dr. Briggs as a man who has "a deep respect for Rome's special greatness and immense potential, indeed actual, fruitfulness in the noblest, deepest Christian life and truth." It is plain, in fact, that for Dr. Briggs, as for Baron von Hügel, the centre of Christian union is the See of Rome; and, indeed, it is hard to see how any man, who has a clear vision of the vast and ever-receding circumference, can discern a centre for religious life anywhere else; the question barely admits of discussion—either we are more or less individualistic by choice, or our eyes, and even our hearts, turn, in spite of all she does to repel them, towards the great Mother of Churches. And, therefore, it cannot be a matter of indifference to us whether she accepts or

rejects the good gifts which Biblical scholarship and research are bringing to us all. It cannot be a matter of indifference, because we, at least, must accept them, and if she refuses them she does more than add a new barrier to those with which she already shuts us out—she strengthens the foundation of all barriers. Acceptance, it is true, would mean much more on her part than a mere recognition of certain facts with regard to the Pentateuch; and because it would mean much more it is the more difficult for her, and the more vigorously refused. It would mean, ultimately, nothing less than a recognition of the symbolic character of dogma, and confession of actual and serious mistakes in relation to matters of history and critical science—mistakes that have been embodied in definitions of the Church. It would mean acknowledgment of error in the official conception and in the working out of the principle of ecclesiastical authority. It would involve also a reconsideration and correction of the universally current scholastic doctrine of nature and supernaturalism. Biblical criticism does not stop at the Pentateuch, Baron von Hügel's "consistent and sincere historico-critical method" is being applied now, with tremendous results, to the Gospels. If any man would know what this means for Rome, as well as the direction in which it is carrying Catholics who are also scholars, and their followers, let him read Abbé Loisy's commentary on the Fourth Gospel, and Abbé Houtin's account of the state of the Biblical question in the twentieth century; and then let him turn to Hébert's attack on the position of

the symbolist or liberal Catholics in his *L'Évolution de la Foi Catholique*. The whole existing system and working of authority is being arraigned, and the doctrine of supernaturalism, which magnifies God's transcendence at the expense of His immanent operation in nature and man, is more than threatened. Both these are being defended at Rome in its refusal to sanction a sound method of criticism and historical research in relation to the Pentateuch; and both lie at the foundation of the barriers erected or maintained by Rome against the reunion of Christendom. Is it possible that the attempt to keep up those barriers, and the attempt to hold a position which the Christian body at large, both in and out of the Roman communion, is fast abandoning or has already abandoned, can be ultimately successful? If the Church were a static institution of set form, it might and probably would be successful; and it would bring about in the narrowly Roman part of the Church, the part of organized supremacy, first isolation and then decay. But the Church is not a static institution; it is, as Baron von Hügel says, essentially "a life and an organism that has grown and is growing." Therefore, it is marvellously, if slowly, adaptable; strong but plastic; full of forces always at work though often hidden from sight, even from the sight of those who should, one would think, be able to see most. We may, therefore, look with confidence for a certain though tardy recognition of this hidden work that shall show us once more how the ideal of Christ, the desire of all truly Christian hearts, is even on earth and in spite of human stupidity, drawing nearer

to the realization which it will surely reach elsewhere.

Baron von Hügel is of opinion that if Catholicism could lay aside its missionary character it might conceivably maintain conflicting standards of historical truth, but that as it is necessarily and inherently missionary it cannot do so, because it would then have no message for, and would obtain no hearing from, "the educated West-European world, since nothing is more certain than that this cultivated non-Roman Catholic world is, in part unconsciously, often slowly, yet everywhere surely, getting permeated and won by critical standards and methods." He very justly declares that "a system cannot both claim to teach all the world and erect an impenetrable partition-wall between itself and the educated portion of that world." But this, of course, is not all there is to be said. The erection of such a barrier would place before its own sons, good children of the Roman Catholic Church, the terrible choice between disobedience and the denial of known truth. In the long run, perhaps in not more than a very short run, —as the Church's history goes—this state of things must cease; the authorities at Rome must give way, even although in giving way they let in the flood which in their prescience they are fearing now. And then a new day in the hope of Christian men will dawn—a day of the beginning of new fulfilment in the divine city and kingdom upon earth.

There can be little doubt, however, that we who are not of the Roman Communion have ourselves much to learn and much to undo before reunion is

possible. Many members of bodies outside Rome hold the scholastic doctrine of the natural and the supernatural which she officially proclaims, and reject what she rejects of the truth that comes through history, through science, through multitudinous activities of man. And in consequence we fail to lay hold upon gifts brought to us through history and science and philosophy and the common life of common men; we lose divine help proffered us by the hands of our fellows in whom the Light of the world is showing His truth. We too are crude naturalists and supernaturalists, and we too are keeping up the disunion of Christendom. For Christendom contains more than nominal Christians; and if Justin Martyr can say that men who "lived under the guidance of the Eternal Reason, such as Socrates and Heraclitus," were Christians, shall we not include in Christendom the innumerable devout thinkers who are not called by that name and yet are finding and showing to us God indwelling all, Christ whom they share with us? These men have much to teach. "La connaissance actuelle de l'univers," says Loisy,[1] "ne suggère-t-elle pas une critique de l'idée de création? La connaissance de l'histoire ne suggère-t-elle pas une critique de l'idée de révélation? La connaissance de l'homme moral ne suggère-t-elle pas une critique de l'idée de rédemption?" Men ask us now, he goes on, to explain God and Christ, because our Christian definitions are in part conceived in a different language from theirs. This is true of ordinary Christians, but above all it stands out

[1] *Autour d'un petit livre*, p. 154.

true in the definitions and explanations of theologians.

One of the most important differences between the language of Christian apologetic, and the language of thinking men of our day, is due to the fact that Christians think of God too much as acting *upon* His world of persons and things, whereas those who are needing a new interpretation almost always and naturally think of Him as acting *in* and *by* them. Creation, revelation, and redemption, conceived and expressed to an excessive degree in terms of the ontological transcendence of God, are foreign, incompatible with modern knowledge, and have become meaningless for the most deeply thinking men of this generation. Science, history, psychology, moral experience, have taught them lessons which have entered into the very fabric of their minds. Nevertheless, their minds are open; their training teaches them both hospitality to truth and courage in the reception of it; many of them are even craving after just that truth which is enshrined in the Christian dogmatic symbols; they are ready and eager for its lessons, not a few accept them when given in language which they understand. But the universally applicable teaching of the imperishable faith is for the most part hidden from them now by verbal symbols which have no likeness to their own; and before Christians, and above all Christian theologians, can teach them, they themselves must learn. They must take what these men have to give, and find out why a new language is required, and why old misconceptions must be abandoned. They must have pity

—that is one thing—but they must do more, they must sympathize; and to be able to sympathize they must know. Unquestionably progress in this matter is being made; it is being made rapidly outside the Roman Communion; it is also being made rapidly within; but while the outside resistance is more or less that of a mob of individuals the authorities at Rome are resisting with all the power of the most completely organized government in the world. There may be many still, even among ourselves, who say that Rome is in this matter playing the part of *Athanasius contra mundum;* English Churchmen have been known quite recently to "vert" on these grounds; nevertheless, the judgement of the most enlightened men among us, Catholic or Protestant, is and must naturally be on the other side. Dr. Briggs has significant words on the subject. "The Scholastic Theologians," he says, "who seem to be in the saddle again, have done mischief enough already. They have alienated a large proportion of educated men and women from the Church, especially in Catholic countries. We were gradually coming to a better state of affairs. Many scholars have become interested in the reunion of Christendom, and have been ready to make great sacrifices, and to labour with zeal and enthusiasm for that great cause. . . . Now the Biblical Commission throw into the arena another challenge to conflict. It is evident that the majority, or the spokesmen of that Commission, do not sincerely desire the application of historical method to historical subject-matters, or the peace, prosperity, and reunion of Christendom.

They prefer direct conflict with scholarship and science, and discord with their fellow-Christians, to the relinquishment, or even to the permitted questioning of their traditional scholastic refinements and dangerously abstract, *a priori*, artificial views. It may be that whom God desires to destroy, He first makes mad." This last, indeed, is what the action of official Rome suggests; but we may put it in another way. We may say that this manner of action seems to us mad just because it is so entirely and so hopelessly out of harmony with the divine-human growth in men, and especially in those Roman Catholic men who have not opposed to the light springing within their minds the opaque screen of official ignorance and systematized prejudice.

If we on our side have faith in the incarnation of God we ought not to be in any doubt as to the issue. Baron von Hügel is in no doubt, and he has given reasons for his confidence, reasons that should come home to every candid, religious, and instructed man. The light and the life are positive, the darkness and the deadness are negative; those are divine and human, these are of dead systems, *exuviae* left behind in our organic growth. Even if the theologians of the present are unchangeable they do not live upon earth and in Rome for ever. These individual men dare not do now what their predecessors did to Galileo; their successors will try to forget what is being now done to Loisy and the rest. The history of the Catholic Church is a history of living change, of living acquisition and casting-off; it is the history of an organism which is always and yet is never the

same. The adoption of the once rejected Aristotelian philosophy, its assimilation and authorization, is an illustrative example of a process that is always at work. Aristotle's metaphysical books were burnt and proscribed; Abelard, the Aristotelian schoolman, was condemned. It would indeed have been "a strange vision," as Mr. Wilfrid Ward says,[1] "alike to St. Bernard"—his opponent—"and to Abelard could they have seen the Encyclical 'Æterni Patris' in which a few years back the present pope [Leo XIII] traced the lineal descent of the philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas from Leo, Gregory, and Augustine; and could they have turned to the volumes in which it was contained, and found the Aristotelian dialectic and Metaphysics adopted into its very essence." Mr. Ward regards this "double attitude" of the Church, to that which is brought to it from without, as due to "a jealousy of hasty and dangerous submission to novel doctrines," and as "nevertheless, compatible with her assimilation in the end of however much they maintain which is true or intellectually valuable." This is doubtless correct. It is doubtless equally correct to say that nearly every great change in the philosophical or scientific conceptions of the world at large seems at first inimical to religious institutions and destructive of theological and popular definitions, even if it does not cast doubt upon the very first and most fundamental principles of religion, as sometimes appears. Yet in every instance, so far,

[1] *Witnesses to the Unseen*, p. 88.

such great changes in thought and knowledge as have stood the test of time and experience have been found not only capable of assimilation by the Church, but actual aids to unfolding the religious truth of which it is the guardian and sustainer. Even the very language of the Church has been modified more than once in order that these new things may be received and fitly expressed. It is at the time of beginnings, when new truth seems dangerous, that it is rejected; when it is better understood, and when the danger associated with it, whether imaginary or real, is past or much diminished, the repellent attitude of the Church is reversed, and the process of vital assimilation, which has probably been going on all along, receives official recognition.

Is there any important difference between the present situation and that in which the Church found itself in relation to Abelard and the Aristotelian philosophy? In one way there is a likeness, in another there is a very great, very important and pregnant difference. The likeness is obvious; the difference must be less obvious, since it is less often perceived. Since the days of Abelard the ways of the world have changed in the direction of increased union and communion among the men of intelligence and knowledge in all countries. The diffusion of literature, the increased facilities of personal intercourse by linguistic accomplishment and by ease of transit from place to place, the formation of world-wide associations of men engaged in the same studies and research, all make for an increasingly rapid

spread of knowledge and process of assimilation of knowledge. Tests are applied in twenty years of our time which would have demanded more than two hundred under former conditions. The army of intelligence is organized and disciplined into new effectiveness ; space is no longer the same obstacle ; and therefore the time needed to sift and consolidate the products of intelligence is not more than a small fraction of what it was. On the other hand the authorities of the Church have taken up an attitude of defence against this newly effective power which suggests the mental condition of some isolated community, a Chinese condition in which change is unrecognized except by warlike exclusion. A blindly conservative fury seems to have been aroused by the assembly around the ancient citadel of these forces of new knowledge. And the outcome is that while the world of intelligence moves more and more quickly, the Roman officials tend increasingly towards a static condition, in which they offer an insensate resistance, suggesting to us onlookers, as Dr. Briggs says, the madness which the gods inflict on men about to be destroyed. The situation is in this respect unlike any situation that has ever been before ; and its consequences are therefore unlike any that have ever been before. In the whole history of the Christian world there has never been such great and growing alienation of intelligent and learned men from the Church. Never before have such large numbers of men of that kind been forced to choose between being Catholics and being faithful learners and teachers of truth. Some of these men have accepted

the dumbness imposed upon them, many have more or less reluctantly ceased to be professing Catholics. And beyond these men an enormous mass of intelligence is being driven out of the Church by the apparent incompatibility of official pronouncements with known truth. Among the latest of these disastrous acts is the pronouncement of the Biblical Commission in the matter of the Pentateuch, a pronouncement which has already done its meed of harm among men who are of less robust faith and less penetrating power of analysis into causes and grounds of hopefulness than Baron von Hügel. The peril is exceptionally great, it is indeed unique; and only such an analysis, such faith and hope, and, we must add, such love, as Baron von Hügel's can keep despair from the hearts of those religious men of learning who look to Rome, as long ago their fathers looked, for the manifested power and place on earth of that hidden union of all men of good will, which, in spite of their failures, their mistakes, and sins, is never either wanting or done away.

Note.—The Encyclical *De Modernistarum Doctrinis*, sent out to the world in September, 1907, emphasizes and gives point to what Baron von Hügel and Professor Briggs said in reference to the Papal Commission and the Pentateuch. The situation is not fundamentally changed; it is only more strictly defined, sharpened and embittered.

"It may be admitted," says Mr. W. J. Williams,[1] "that official authority in the Church has exceeded the privilege

[1] *Newman, Loisy, Pascal, and the Catholic Church*, pp. 214–15.

of officials to be obstructive; that officials have done all that in them lay to represent the unity of the Church, not as a spontaneous unity arising from the depth and vitality of her teaching, but as an artificial uniformity brought about by tyranny and coercion. It may be admitted that, by their condemnation of so vast a number of philosophers, theologians and critics, they have at the present day brought about a deadlock between thought and religion, and reduced authority to impotence. It were indeed vain to deny that there are officials who act as if they thought that the strength of an executive consisted in pushing its claims with peremptory violence and straining prerogative till it snaps. But those facts, which few deny, do but afford a clearer evidence how stupendous must be the vitality, and how profound the inward unity, of the Church, when even such a strain as this has not been able to suppress the one or to dissolve the other. If, in spite of this intolerant narrowness and this direct discouragement of all originality of thought; if, in spite of so rigid a conservatism and the avowed attempt to attain, by coercion, a merely external uniformity, some of the most original minds in the world have nevertheless appeared in the Church and thought it worth while rather to suffer persecution within than seek an individualistic liberty outside, it is surely a proof of the depth and vitality of an inward unity which none but the ignorant could confound with the uniformity of the drill-sergeant and the schoolmaster. A peremptory spirit in authority has done all that could be done by interdict, by threat and by terror to turn the unity of the Church into some such rigid uniformity as this; but the more resolutely the attempt has been made, only the more clearly has it been proved by the result that a deeper unity exists in spite of the officials—a unity which defies them now and will be their condemnation hereafter."

Although this passage was written by Mr. Williams before the appearance of the Encyclical, I insert it here because it bears pertinently upon that and every other attempt at the forcible destruction of ideas.

THE CREED AND GENERAL CONSENT

I HAVE begun to think in the light of my own experience about the value of the consensus of the Church to the articles of its formulated Creed. When I do this, when I think critically, when I discuss in that light the origin and history of men's consent, and its character, which is not simple, I see that the value of the Creed is by no means uniform throughout, and that the consent to it is not only unequal in different parts and with regard to different articles, but is of two radically different kinds. There is a consent of contribution—that is one kind, and there is a consent of mere submission to statements imposed as true by an external authority—that is another kind. I learn, therefore, that consent may not always be as valuable as it seems; that, in fact, it certainly is not as valuable if along the ages of consent through which the Catholic Church has carried its historic *symbolum* there have been multitudes who merely submitted, however eagerly and joyfully, to an imposed deposit. In my mind's eye there is the picture of a multitude who once would have joined eagerly and joyfully in a solemn declaration that the earth is the unmoving centre of the solar system, and would have seen in it the Church's inspired testimony not only to the dignity of man, which it well might be, but to the historical and

scientific truth of the cosmogony of Genesis. I see the picture of another multitude who now unite in eagerly and joyfully affirming the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Mother of Christ and the Assumption into heaven of the last of the many earthly and material "bodies" which she discarded on earth, and discover in it not a spiritual recognition of the sublimity of the manifestation of God in Christ—a recognition striving after new symbolic expression—but a guaranteed witness to the historical truth of one miracle in the phenomenal plane, and a unique operation of God in the spiritual and moral plane. And I see now a great multitude singing the Nicene Creed, as other great multitudes have sung it for many centuries, without any sense of the difference between testimony to one thing and testimony to another of another kind, or between matters of historical occurrence and matters of man's spiritual experience.

Of what value—I ask myself—in relation to the question of the truth of any statement of historical occurrence or scientific fact in the phenomenal plane, is a general consent procured under such conditions? Is the submission, however eager and joyful, of all Europe in the eleventh century, and for half a dozen centuries before, of any more value than mine is now? In no instance can I see any contribution to the weight and import of the first consensus at Nicæa; in no instance does the submission of men who cannot give from their own experience either confirmation or contradiction of the statements of that order affect the question at issue. No amount

of popular consent in favour of the centrality of the earth in the solar system, or of the cosmogony of Genesis, has sufficed to keep either safe when evidence against them overcame evidence for them. And so it is with the similar matters of the Creed. These things, in so far as they are phenomenal occurrences, are scientific questions; and by the verdict of science, when science arrives upon the scene, they stand or they fall. There is no help for it; whether we like it or do not matters of historical happening are on one side of them materials for science.

So in relation to the Creed I am learning to say *distinguo;* I am learning to distinguish between the consensus to which I and the rest of the multitude may contribute usefully, and the consensus which needs experts to give it value. The multitude and I cannot confirm the statement about Pontius Pilate, although there are certain men among us who can. On the other hand, we can all learn to confirm from our experience—if we will—far more tremendous statements concerning a Father Almighty, a Son "by whom all things were made," and a Holy Spirit "who spake by the prophets"; and if we submit to the authority of the consensus in this respect, we discover in ourselves its confirmation. We may on occasion use other words and symbols in which to clothe and express these truths of experience; we may even quarrel over our words and symbols, but the truths are always there for us to possess—if we will. We never find this to be the case in regard to the statements about historical occurrence;

the experts must help us here—the historians, the critics of literature, the professional students. Their consent is the only one of value to us all, like the consent of astronomers and physicists in respect of the truths of the solar system. I do not believe the statement about Pontius Pilate simply because millions of men have solemnly and enthusiastically pledged themselves to its truth; I believe it because the few who are competent to reject it do not, and never did, reject it. In relation to spiritual truths, to matters of that splendid co-operation of man and God which we call ethical faith, I submit to the consensus of the Church (where there is a consensus); and I have never been deceived, nor do I see any prospect of being deceived. There are treasures of truth and of ethical life which I have not yet grasped; but experience of those which I have grasped teaches me that the witness to the treasures is a true witness and that it is I who am at fault in not laying hands upon them. So I distinguish between matters of faith and morals, in relation to which the general consensus of the body whereof I am a part commands my allegiance; and matters of science, in relation to which it must do its work by specially deputed organs—that is, by experts fit for this office—in order to obtain any real and valuable agreement and witness. When this work has been done, the body, after a time, always accepts its results, assents to them, and finds them good because it sees them fitting into place with other things that are good. Before this has been done, the body's valuable consensus to matters of science does not

really exist; that which looks like such a consensus is due to mere submission in which there is no contribution of value.

The three ways in which men draw near to truth are all plain to see in and behind the Creed. There is the scientific way, there is the philosophic way, and there is that of an ethical faith—which is the way of the springs of life. It is true that both in and behind the articles we can see more than one of these; we can see, for example, both faith and philosophy in by far the greater number of them; but in statements involving historical fact, and behind them as a background, we are compelled to see as of considerable though not chief importance the way of a science, more or less competent, more or less developed. These are, and always have been, statements of historical happening; and although philosophy and faith may both have concurred to make their acceptance easy in the past, this support would not be adequate to sustain them now, as historical occurrences, against an adverse verdict of literary and historical science. The consensus of scientific experts must be in such cases the supremely important consensus of contribution in dealing with history as history. It is otherwise with these and other statements taken as vitally significant concerning God and His relation with man. There is philosophy, doubtless, and there is science, in all the statements concerning Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; but there is above all the ethical faith which in every age has found its corroboration and fulfilment in the hearts and lives of Christian men; and in most

cases even the symbols in which faith has clothed its visions and perceptions of reality are of universal character—symbols that find a welcome everywhere, and are of the philosophy common to all men, not of the elaborated reflective possessions of the few. Hence the wonderful elasticity of those symbols and their power of adaptation to the demands of our developing life; hence some great part of their imperishable value as symbols never to be wholly outworn: they are rooted in our common life, which grows, yet is always the same.

Nevertheless, all are symbols only, and as such are inadequate to the realities for which they stand. And there is nothing to hinder us from frankly avowing that in so far as science and philosophy enter to give us men the means of expressing in words the faith that is alive in us, the symbols that we use must partake of the special imperfections and inadequacy of scientific and philosophic thought and language in reference to matters of spiritual experience and concrete life. Every verbal expression of truth, or doctrine or dogma, must be, as the theologians say, *pro hic et nunc;* and, to be understood, must be taken in the fulness of its context, which includes the peculiar limitations and difficulties which they necessarily introduce.

Because I believe in the growing incarnation of God as God-Man, I regard the consensus of the Church of Christ as of commanding value; but only where it is due to a consent of men in whom the truth has been, as far as possible, made known.

There have been times when men of the Church did not distinguish between that which was known and that which was only guessed; or between that which began as a reasonable guess and was passed from man to man until it came to seem a statement of fact, and that which was always a statement of fact, known as such in its beginning. There have been times when almost anything seemed accredited as true because it appeared to be edifying. There have been times when the essence of a thing was held to reside in something fixed, and no allowance could be claimed, or allowed, for the growth that must be manifested in the operation of a great principle of life. And always in such times—it is safe to say—not every consensus in name was (or is) a consensus of fact and worth. It would be surely a matter for wonder that the Creed contains so little that is not due to general and valuable consent, that it has in it so little material of science or philosophy, so much of faith and the knowledge of the spirit, were it not that we heartily believe in the incarnation of God who is, among other things, very Truth, and heartily believe that His Spirit works in the spirit and flesh of His humanity.

But I think we may well be thankful and glad that the Creed contains some material of the kind open to expert criticism, because otherwise we of the Church might perpetuate the temporary error which has led us to a false conception of authority, and even to something not unlike a cynical disparagement of man—something which is a practical denial of the sublime truth of the incarnation of

God in man and the elevation of man into God. We are great, we men; we do not need an absolute authority that sits upon a throne apart and points this way or that. *Verbum caro factum est et habitavit in nobis;* man's truth is immanent in man, and each man finds it among men and in himself. Man has authority over men; but man is constituted by men in God and by God in men. Matters of faith and morals are matters in which all men of good-will are growing to be experts; but for matters of science and philosophy we need men specially fitted for the work. Faith and morals are of vital necessity, science and philosophy are not. It is of cardinal and vital importance that I should be in experimental possession (whether nominally so or not) of the truth that man is taken into God, and is united and conjoined with Him in Christ—in fact, that God is really incarnate and manifested as incarnate here upon earth; it is of comparatively little importance that I should be in intellectual possession of the truth, for example, about the particular phenomenal manner in which Christ made His appearance in the world. I do not know the manner of His face and features; I have not one line of His writings, no word of His that did not pass through some men's memory and many men's hands to come to me—these things are of no vital importance. And so it is with the mere manner of His coming upon earth. Whether Christ was born as other men—He who was the Elder Brother of us all—or whether He was born as no other man has yet been born, is not in itself a question of great importance to me; *He is*

that He is. The thing that is of considerable importance in reference to this matter is that I should fit it (when I know the truth of it and whatever the truth of it may be) into its right place; and thereafter come to find it very good, as I have come to find other truths of that kind very good, and have learnt to see in them gifts of the God-Man for the enlarging of my life in Him.

I shall be glad when the historical and literary experts have told me all there is to tell about the matters lying in great part within their province; and more glad when other experts have revised our conception of the principle of authority; but all such things are departmental affairs. They do not affect my ethical faith and the experience that confirms my faith. I still accept that which the consensus of the Body guarantees to me, although I am learning to distinguish between a consent of contribution of immanent truth and a consent of submission to external pronouncement. The Church of the God-Man is supreme over me because the Spirit of God indwells it in us all; but I thoroughly believe that we are working in that Spirit when we are endeavouring to distinguish thus between immanence and externality, and between subject-matters which are vital and subject-matters which are only scientific or philosophical.

Many of us have made this distinction with regard to the authority and the statements of the Bible—but not without strife and pain; is it unreasonable to say that we must now make it with regard to the authority and the authoritative utterances of the

Church—even if this, too, must be with strife and pain?

The ever-renewed conflict between expanding human life and its outgrowth of system and organization is not in its present phase on a par with the episode of Galileo, or the episode of the evolutionists. In neither of these cases did the full authority of the Church appear to be officially pledged against the new truths of science. There is nothing in the official Creed about the arrangements of the solar system or about the process by which different species of living beings have arisen. But there are in the Creed definite statements concerning historical occurrences which are now being questioned; the authority of the Church appears to be at stake as it was never at stake before; the value of the consensus seems threatened as it never was threatened before; and if the battle goes as it has gone in the case of Galileo and in the case of the evolutionists, what are Catholic-minded men to do, and think, and say, with regard to their relation as individuals to the body of which they are members?

Is there any rational answer to this question which does not involve a distinction between matters of faith and morals and matters of science; and between —on the one hand—the valuable consent of those men in whom truth of either faith and morals, or of science, is immanent and—on the other hand—the consent of those in whom assent to a statement, whether it be a true or a false statement, means at bottom nothing more significant than submission? Once for all we are learning now to see that the

value of the Church's general consensus in favour of the statements in the Creed depends upon the contribution brought to it by those who consent. Do they contribute from the store of truth dwelling in them by experience, or do they contribute nothing more than the moral value of their submission to that which is for them only an external deposit? Great as may be this moral value, especially in certain times and states of the individual and the Church, it has no influence on the value for us of the Church's guarantee of historical and scientific truth.

What then? Are we to renounce the authority of the Church and to declare its consensus altogether valueless? Why should we throw away the baby with the bath? Why should we not take lessons from the past and learn once more to distinguish; and this time between consent of contribution and consent of submission, as well as (in the old way) between faith and morals—which are of the totality of life—and science—which is one of its outlying departments?

APOLOGETIC THEOLOGY AND THE METHOD OF IMMANENCE

WE are asking for a new apologetic, a new manner of presenting the eternal treasures of the Church before men who now cannot see that they are treasures at all. When everything that we ask of teachers has been done, what—we ask ourselves—will remain to be done by the men who are taught? What part do men play in these great matters, when they stand in face of the best presentation of our treasures? When I put these questions to myself I discover that I open up more.

After all, the perfect apologetic of an angel from heaven addressed to men upon earth would not suffice to bring a man to God against his will. Nor would the apologetic of an angel, reasonably addressed to the reason of men, itself pass beyond reasoning. It might call a man to faith, it might suggest faith as its justification; but it would be primarily an affair of theological science, and as such would address a man as a reasoning man. Yet the object of all apologetic is to further the acceptance of divine-human truth revealed in the heart, truth of vital import, truth by which men are to be set free to live as they never lived before. What then, we must ask, do we think of men? In fact, whose sons are they? They are—it is the only answer we ought to

give—the sons of God. They are made in His image, and their "natural" life, although different and distinct, is not alien from His "supernatural" life. It is of another order, but it is not separate and isolated from Him. We recognize in men the freedom of divine sons, as well as a dependence upon their eternal Father exceeding immeasurably the dependence of the most dependent among them on his temporal father. The conception of fatherhood and sonship is here a poor analogy for the great reality. Men are more free in relation to God, and more dependent upon Him, than this analogy can express. The truth of the divine-human relation is a divine and unfathomable truth, and we can only indicate an approach towards it by setting two such terms as freedom and dependence together, and by speaking of a relation that is familiar to us in our temporal state, but can be only an inadequate analogical symbol of a relation into which God enters with us.

When we recognize both the dependence of men upon God and their freedom—a freedom which is effective not only in their relation with God, but in their relation with their fellow-men and all the world —we imply, of course, that neither a rational apologetic nor any pressure of authority, rational or irrational, can of itself compel them to receive divine-human truths into themselves. Freedom is freedom of the whole man, and the man in his wholeness escapes compulsion of any kind whatever. We acknowledge, too, that whosoever may sow or water, it is God (upon whom our life depends) who

gives the living increase. Our teachers sow among us the presentation of some record of revealed truth; they set before us—under the inevitable conditions of intellectual fallibility, a logical method strictly inappropriate to its subject, and a language formed and developed under another order of experience, that of the senses,—they set before us, under these conditions, a presentation of the sublime objects of faith; but they cannot effect a union of truths with our souls; they cannot, even if they succeed in enlisting our intellect on their side, induce us to have living faith. It is impossible to effect a reception and assimilation of heavenly treasures as heavenly treasures by our free living selves without an immanent process of revelation. That marvellous deed of the incorporation of truth in our lives is done, if it is done at all, by the operation of the grace of God when we freely co-operate with it. If our teachers could bring about a union of some rational statement of the object of faith with our intelligence, as they might bring about a union of some mathematical statement with our intelligence; if they could induce us to say "I believe your statement about the object of faith as a logical necessity," they might only have touched us, as it were, on the surface, and our hearts might be as far as ever from vital union with the things of God. There would be about this belief no real faith, none of the faith which is bound up with love; and therefore no new divine life would penetrate our life in consequence of such a reception of truth. Authority, legitimate authority, in the Church does not exist to impose revealed truth upon us; for

revealed truth, just because it is addressed to the whole man, the free son of God who is dependent on Him, cannot be imposed. How then, we ask ourselves, does faith that is of love come to be—the living faith which is the manner of the true life of men with God? How, in fact, does revelation occur? A man is truly, and after the fashion of God, God's son; his Father never leaves him to himself, his dependence is upon that which is nearer than hands and feet. We never find the "natural" man of speculative abstraction (nor should we of the Church expect to find him if we confess the Incarnation as no mere historical fact), we never find this abstract unreal man any more than we find the economic man of science.

Every man's life is penetrated by God waiting, as God alone waits, for recognition by him, even if there seems to be in the man as a sign of this divine incarnation no more than a vague want, an emptiness, a blind desire to find and possess that which is greater, better, than himself. A man cannot desire that of which he has not so much as a beginning. "I am the ground of thy beseeching." "*Tu ne me chercherais pas si tu ne m'avais trouvé.*" God's life is in every man, God's life either become, according to the measure of the man's goodwill, explicit as the man's own life—or else waiting, with the patience of God, for him to realize his sonship in it. It is this sublime fact that gives the opportunity of an aid to revelation coming from without, a place for that help towards revelation which apologetic may bring. In so far as the man finds his own beginning of the life

of sonship, as it is realized by him, met from without by something that suggests or promises the answer to a further want, the filling of a void, the satisfaction of a desire felt by him, statements of divine truth will find at last, under the operation of the vivifying grace of God, the real response of faith. They suggest to the man at first perhaps a change of attitude, perhaps a further stretching-out of his goodwill; or repentance of sin, or an occasion of responding love, or encouragment and hope; they help, it may be, to bring intellect and heart and will to a new and growing harmony; they at least show him an example of the life of men who have lived truth as he has not; and so, in one fashion or another, they clear the way for a further meeting of the Father and the son, a deepening realization of the oneness of those two who are infinitely different but are not divided. Thus a man may be helped to make explicit in himself the character given to his life by its union with the inexhaustible source of new life in God; thus the active process of revelation in the man whom God is teaching may be aided by other men. The presentation of divine truth from without is an occasion for the reality of a revelation within. In this process of revelation the man plays his active, voluntary part; faith is not passive, he is free; not even God can give unless the man has the goodwill to receive. So faith is in every man a living act which neither God nor man can compel; and without faith no divine truth, no truth of life of the whole man, can be imposed either by God or man. The reception of truth is a living act of the

whole man; it is an active uniting of his will with God, and of his love with that penetrating love of his Father which seeks and calls him first. All this vital process of the elevation and transformation of the human into the divine, the taking of manhood into God, occurs when divine truth, living religious truth, is revealed to and assimilated by a man. Without it, divine truth is for him at most merely intellectually discerned, instead of being possessed as an integral element of his life—it is not for him the concrete truth that Christ is, it is not revealed as "the Desire of the Nations." Revelation is a life-process, and has its seat only in a living man. What, then, is the written treasure of the Church in our eyes, the eyes of modern laymen? What is the Gospel that the Church guards, confirms, presents in words to her children for their acceptance, and proffers to the world? It is not a revelation; it is the account of a revelation, the interpretation of a revelation, a representation of the symbolic picture of a revelation painted in the reflective minds of those in whose life-process the concrete truth took part, the Desire of the Nations was made known. And why is the representation of a mental and symbolic picture of such inestimable value as it certainly is, to us in whom the same life-process of revelation actually occurs? It is because (so we say and so we believe) the deposit of faith that the Church has inherited, guarded, and constantly confirmed—always, everywhere, and through the experience of all—represents a uniquely significant body of experience. It represents the experience of men

of goodwill meeting, human face to human face, with Christ, the visible Desire of the Nations, the perfect God-Man dwelling upon earth. The record of this experience constitutes for us a norm; it is, as Father Tyrrell says, classical. It is central, it is supreme as test, as explanation, as pattern, as guarantee for the experience of us all. But we remember that we do not possess the experience of those who made the record; and that even if it were possible for us to meet St. John face to face and hear him speak he could not give it to us; he could only describe the mental and symbolic picture of it which he had painted after reflective effort in his own mind. He could not pass on to us anything but a symbolic representation of the vital change in which his life had been lifted up into the life of God manifest in the flesh. He could only tell us in imperfect, inadequate language, and after the manner of himself, his time, his surroundings, about the impression made in and on him. St. John, St. Peter, all the apostles, held their treasure, even for their own contemplation, in earthen vessels. It was incorporate in their lives, according to each man's measure; it was even visible and tangible; but they could not pass it on to us as a living thing. The record of a supreme revelation, the record set down in words to represent a revelation which was made under conditions never repeated, and yet is for ever being repeated, is the treasure guarded by the Church; but it is, in itself and as external to us, only a record. We see that it was made in a light and heat of spirit and mind and sense, in an enthusiasm

of living faith and realization, that has never occurred again in the history of Christendom; we see that even its "form of sound words" is therefore sacred to us; but we see also that it is the work of men, and that it is held by the Church in the language and after the symbolic fashion of men. It is supremely precious, but it is not direct divine revelation. God reveals Himself, we know, after the manner of eternity and infinity within the hearts of his sons; they can only tell each other of His grace after their own fashion. God alone, too, can give without carefulness; we think that His Church must always be watchful over her words, and over the manner in which she bestows her treasure.

A man, any one man among us, feels the touch of God, the touch of divine goodness and of divine love, in every one of his impulses towards goodness and truth and fulness of life. When he thinks about this divine touch and about its direction and purpose, when he discovers the power, not himself and yet himself, that makes for rightness of life, he reflects upon it, and projects for himself a representative symbolic image of one kind or another, different according to his surroundings and according to the state and habit of his mind at the time. It is for the Church, by the norm of religious experience that she possesses, to confirm or to correct his symbolism, and to assure him that the touch he feels is indeed the touch of God. But just because it has not pleased God to save men after the manner of dialectic but after the manner of the operative and concrete wholeness of life, the Church, we maintain, must make continuous efforts of

adaptation to the intellectual and social changes among men. Thus and thus only will the treasure of the Church be laid hold of by men, age after age, as not only correcting and confirming, but revealing —that is, explaining life and its problems to him and opening up a new way of revelation and of conjunction with God in himself. Divine truth, whether in words or rites, cannot become his *ex opere operato*, any more than food can nourish the tissues of his body without his active assimilation of it. And the growing work of his assimilation of truth is conditioned not only by his goodwill and his moral direction and attitude, but by the direction and habits of his intelligent mind, in fact by what he is, at the passing moment, as a whole man. This depends upon a thousand influences from his fellow-men and from the changing heritage of stored results of experience in all departments of thought and action, as well as upon his attitude of will. He has solidarity and interpenetration of life not only with the divine source of life within himself, but with his whole progressive world of men and things without. The members of the Church of Christ, each of and all his fellows, may be instruments of God and mediators, but only under conditions varying through the ages, and differing in nations and in individuals. Like St. Paul, the Apostolic Church in her missionary work needs to be always ready to become all things to all men and in all times. The work of adaptation, the adjustment of service to the present needs of the sons of God, is a great part of the work of the Church as guardian and protector of the faith. How,

indeed, can that faith be protected (except as a mere dead relic of the past) unless it is presented ever afresh as a living answer to the questioning, and a living fulfilment of the desire, of men as they are? The Church is not the custodian of a museum; it is the living body of truth, the personal expression of the living and growing Christ.

The mission of the Church, the service of its authority, is that of bringing men to fuller, freer, and more explicit consciousness of themselves as members of the divine humanity, sons of God by nature and adoption, supernatural souls naturally Christian. To do this she must serve the intellect, serve the heart, serve the will of men, serve every man—and learn from him as well as teach. "It is as clear as daylight," says Mr. Williams,[1] "that if authority is used as the mystics used it, if authority is used as a testimony to the true religious exigencies of man and as a guide to the true law of our minds, it will be not only consistent with freedom but a cause of liberation."

[1] *Newman, Loisy, Pascal, and the Catholic Church*, p. 224.

THE RESTORATION OF THE PAST

WE need the past; we need to make it real and living to us in relation with our religious life. To do this we must abandon the habit of looking upon it after the archæological or the museum fashion. Just as those dead men, our forefathers, are living men and members of the same body as we ourselves, so is their religion a living part of our religion, their experience organically one with our experience. We do not know how to treat it thus, we do not know how to throw off the museum habit. And yet this must be done, for how else shall we make known to ourselves the splendid unity of the God-Man as Christians should know it? How else shall we, indeed, throw off our individuality and put on more of the wholeness of expanding personal life? We must embrace the past; but first we must get rid of its fetters. We must learn to incorporate all religious life and experience with our own, and the barriers of time must cease to be barriers to our living and uniting operation.

As long as men held the Catholic Creed and the body of truths which are "of faith" for Christians, in the beautiful but uncritical spirit of those whose general presuppositions and use of a common language were for all practical purposes the same as those of the men who first expressed them for us,

a sense of the unity of present with past and future came into men without effort and without resistance. It was of the natural Catholic heritage into which a man was born and from which nothing urged him in reason and conscience to depart. But in every period when the presentment of divine truths is being adapted to a change in manner of thought and speech, some degree of alienation from the past must necessarily be felt, some sense of difference in religion must arise. The past then begins to seem really past; even the future seems perhaps more of a present possession, more an affair of organic oneness, than that foreign past that has been outgrown and, as it were, found out to be rejected. This has been part of the process of the life of man, in religion as in everything else, and in the Catholic Church as everywhere.

We have endeavoured to check in the Anglican Communion, and in a certain restricted sphere of thought, this feeling of alienation; many of us have done our best to attain a sense of oneness with the Christian faith along the ages. In the "Oxford Movement" and the "Catholic Revival" within the Church of England, there has been brought before us our kinship with and our indebtedness to the men of the early Christian centuries. But more is needed now; the Oxford Movement and even the Catholic Revival (as it has been) are both threatened, if they are not smitten, with intellectual sterility. Their work is done—on the lines selected for it, and in this direction. It was a valuable work, it was a great work in its day and place; but it must give way to

another. We cannot now be content to follow in the old paths after the old fashion; we cannot go back to the past, it is for the past to follow us, to enter into our life, and to be made one with our life and with the life of all men in all times and places. So only can we tread again those old paths in brotherly understanding.

Few things sound so absurd to a Catholic-minded modern man as the proposal to go back theologically, ritually, and so on, to this or that century or period. We cannot thus cut life with a hatchet. Our minds look to have all the centuries, all the peoples, embraced in a concrete living synthesis after the pattern of life, which is not only human and successive, but divine and held in oneness by God. So we desire to interpret the past, the present, the future, in terms of that life as we know it; we desire to interpret the central and enduring truths of the Catholic Faith in terms of the enduring constitution of man and his progressive community of existence. We are trying, in fact, to take history and psychology into our hands and beat out of them a method that shall give us the past again as one with *our* present. In this effort we hope to see the men of the past as men at one with the present and showing us the everlasting truth of their religion and ours, the human psychological truth that is at root the same in all times and places, and in all its variety of branching. And afterwards we hope to learn lessons of theology in a way that we can understand, that is, in the way of the past made one with the present as interpreting and absorbing it.

Human life is the true field of history, the region

of the occurrence of real facts. If a man has believed that Zeus gave strength to his arm we do better to acknowledge the strengthening of the arm than to attack his belief in Zeus as untrue. He will be our own present man, a brother, if we see Zeus as his appropriate symbol and accept as real the fact that came into his life. And when the Christian Fathers of us all agreed in declaring that Christ "descended into hell," can we refuse to see that, although it did not seem to them a symbol at all, they had no more fitting symbol to express the truth of the greatness and depth of penetration by which the divine Lord of life, in perfect love, takes earthly humanity, past and present, unto Himself, and does not shrink from contact with the worst and lowest things of human fate? Could we say this better ourselves? For them hell was a place under their feet—what of that? The error was of the passing stage of their intellect, the truth was vital and essential and eternal, ours, theirs, every man's, inexhaustible and indestructible.

Here we come to a modern man's test of truth and reality. Can we dissolve it by critical investigation? Is it inexhaustibly fruitful for living experience? We may ask these questions about everything that claims to be truth and reality, and if we can answer "No" to the first and "Yes" to the second the claim is established for us. So when we take the statement of the Creed that our Lord "descended into hell" we find that the manner in which we can answer these two questions about it depends upon the manner in which we look at the statement. If we take it as men formerly took it, and as the Fathers who framed it

took it, for a statement of an occurrence that might have been verified by the senses (or by some process on the lines of sense-process), then we are obliged to say that critical investigation makes the statement worthless to us, and reduces it, in fact, to untruth. We *cannot* believe that if the eyes of the apostles had been opened between the day of the crucifixion and the morning of the resurrection they would have seen their Master going downwards into a place of the punishment and detention of men, situated under their feet. Nor, taken in that way, does the statement seem to be inexhaustibly fruitful for living experience. Are we then to say that this article of the Creed is untrue? That would be to tie ourselves to a crude intellectualism and a materialistic interpretation. Not thus can we make the past live again in and with us, nor discover eternal truth and reality.

We must try to find out the divine-human truth that the framers of our Creed were trying to represent to themselves by such statements. We must take into consideration the condition of knowledge at their time, the manner of their thinking; we must even ask ourselves what, if we suppose with these men that hell is really under our feet and souls are there in prison, we ourselves should see of spiritual and vital import in the descent of Christ among them. Then, after this process, or some such process, we shall begin to distinguish the revealed truth of the love of God under the intellectual presentment of it, and we shall give very different answers to our test-questions. We may say that no critical investigation dissolves away this truth of the universality of the love of God, and

no time exhausts its infinite fertility in the experience of man. We may say that criticism certainly dissolves the statement, taken as one of fact that might have been verified as by sense; but that if we take that statement as the naive presentation of an infinite truth that cannot be spoken of by us except under one symbol or another, each and all inadequate to the truth, and only for a time adequate to men—criticism is disarmed, and even the symbol, just because it is so naive and so pictorial, stands untouched and keeps its meaning for us. And thus the past lives again, and the minds of the men of the past become for ever at one with another.

It is the vital meaning of things for us and for them that we must seek in all they have given us. The truth is that which lived in their lives and may live in ours. When we find it we know the oneness of ourselves with them, and of them with us. But the rationalistic and sensory fashion of looking at their treasures makes the men foreign to us, and cuts us off from the use and profit of that which they bequeathed. And we find as much harm in accepting such treasures only in the rationalistic and sensory fashion as in rejecting them in that way; after such a fashion they are never enjoyed and partaken of. If I accept the whole Creed in no better way it profits me nothing. This, of course, is a truism; but we find some good in noting it because it points straight to the needs of the modern man, who will begin to understand our teachers of the Church if they will frame an apologetic on the lines it suggests. We are learning that the Church has

always in view the preservation and commendation of vital truths of the love of God made manifest in man's experience; we are beginning to see that the character of any intellectual presentment of those truths is a varying incident of our low estate; we discover that our estate is so low as to afford us only a choice between one inadequate symbol or analogy and another; and then we find the edge of criticism turned. Is there any other way to turn it?

THE FAITH ONCE DELIVERED

A MAN, even a religious-minded man, dominated by the spirit of the age rather than led by it, might urge upon us that according to this spirit we ought to be unable to recognize any revelation as classical or normative, and incapable of development. We may give him something worthy of his reference in the answer which Father Tyrrell has suggested. Let me quote here a passage illustrative of the argument, from the chapter on "Revelation" in *Through Scylla and Charybdis* (pp. 295–7).

"From its very nature Revelation admits of development as little as does poetry or art, and for much the same reason. For in man it is, after all, only the mind and the intellect that develop in any appreciable sense by the steady accumulation of experience and information and by the continual effort to understand and systematise that experience for the guidance of life, thought, speech and action. But the great driving-forces of life—the passions, affections, emotions—are as constant as the structure of man's bodily frame and as his organs of sensation or locomotion—constant at least in the variety and irregularity of their distribution. Here we find no sort of systematic progress and development. Faith, Hope, Desire, Fear, Love—human and divine—these are to be found sporadically in their highest intensity

at any time in history, at any stage of mental development. It is not in these driving-forces, but in the direction which the mind gives to them, that we are to look for development. There is no progress in goodness, *i.e.* in the *love* of what is right. There is no progress in religion, *i.e.* in the spirit of Faith, Hope and Charity; but only in theology, *i.e.* in the *understanding* of things divine. Can it be maintained that for all our clearer understanding religious feeling has ever risen higher than in some of the Psalms or in Deutero-Isaiah? or that for all the ethical refinement that separates us from savagery and barbarism there has been a proportional advance on the moral heroism of the past? Has poetry developed since Homer, or Dante, or Shakespeare? Has passion grown in depth, and purity with the succession of centuries? All we can say is that the mysticism, the heroism, the inspiration of those creative spirits would have found in our time a fuller, more flexible, more intelligent medium of self-expression; that the forces would have been more skilfully, less wastefully, directed. Revelation stands in this respect on the same level as those great creations of art and poetry which are but the natural self-expression of that passionate experience which they embody imaginatively—as natural as a cry, or a sob, or a groan, which signify but do not state; whose truth is not that of statement. Such creations would be of no greater artistic truth had they been embodied in the terms and images of a more delicate and highly developed culture. Nay, the ruder and less pliant the medium, the stronger

and greater does the inspiration seem which could mould it like wax to its purpose. Revelation, the natural self-expression of a divine afflatus, is as the record of itself made by a passing hurricane in the wrack and ruin which it leaves in its wake. The nature of that record varies according to what lies in the track of the tempest; but whether it be written in the heaped and furrowed sands of the desert, or in the uprooted trunks, torn limbs and scattered foliage of the forest, or in the bared roof-trees, levelled walls and fallen towers of the wind-swept city, its lesson is equally legible as a revelation of the strength and direction of a mighty spirit that has passed by. Had Christ come in another age to another people, the Gospel, written in different words and deeds, had been still the same Gospel, the record of the same Power and Spirit, albeit in conflict with another class of oppositions and obstructions.

"Hence, though it is preposterous for a science, and, therefore, for Theology, to be under the bondage of the past, and to look to its first crude essays as normative and canonical, there is no such unreasonableness in requiring art or literature to look to the great creations of former times for their inspiration and guidance; and for the same reason there is no obscurantism in holding that a revelation two thousand years old may be a standard and test for all future time. When it is a question of Christian theology or ecclesiastical institutions, which are the work of human reflection and ingenuity, the appeal to the criterion of primitive times is treason against the laws of progress. Not so when it is a question

of the Christian spirit and of the Revelation in which it is embodied; for these lie outside the realm of progress and admit of no quasi-organic development."

The distinction between revelation and theology, when made after this fashion, commends itself to religious-minded modern men. It brings with it a *prima facie* claim upon their consideration. They have in their minds much to which it appeals, much with which it is plainly congruous. There is, for example, their knowledge of the sporadic character of genius, of its appearance in all ages and peoples and under all conditions; and they are without difficulty induced to recognize religious genius as they recognize poetic genius. They are ready, then, to see in the productions of religious genius the same relative independence of intellectual development and of the progress of civilization that is manifest in poets. What Father Tyrrell says about the passions and the "driving-force" of man presents its own credentials. And many have learnt from psychological writers, especially from Professor William James (whose book on "The Varieties of Religious Experience" is of great value to apologists of Christianity), that something reasonably called inspiration, something reasonably held to bring about religious revelation, really does take place in men, and is similar to the process which brings about in them artistic productiveness.

This is the occasion of a great opportunity. The next step is to prepare a man to consider the supremely good news by showing him that some

good news has been coming in every age and place and condition; and that the apparatus of revelation is in some degree the possession of every normal man, although only the religious genius has it in the exceptional splendour of its fuller operation. Then, when or if a man has come to see that what is revealed is always the thing needed, the fulfilment of desire, the response of more ample life to the cravings of life; he may begin to look in another light upon the Good News of Christ—the Desire of all nations and of every man. If Christ comes to him as He came to St. John and St. Peter and St. Paul, if He comes as He came to the men of Athens and Alexandria and Rome, if, in fact, He comes as the fulfilment of need, the solution of the practical problems of life, the promise of the fulness of all life—that after which the soul is an-hungered—will He not be received, even by the modern man, when his soul really is an-hungered? Such a man is ready now, as he always has been, to turn round and look within himself for the incarnate love, the life of his life, the ever-present Saviour. He may have given the divine Love and Light some other name; but he is not likely to refuse to name Him in a new fashion. Whom he ignorantly worships we shall be able to declare unto him. God will find him within, touch him within, reveal his emptiness, and reveal to him not only his emptiness but the hints, the beginnings, the promptings, of a fulness that is proffered there within himself. In the God-seeking depths of life he will at last discover the uttered word of God.

So we may interpret to him the faint revealing that occurs in himself, the touch of God urging him and all men in the way that we know as Christ. "Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship"—we may say once more—"we declare." The Gospel of the Incarnation, the Crucifixion, the Resurrection, is the Gospel that the modern world is seeking and rejects. Let it be enforced as the precious treasure of divine humanity. Let us not stoop to accommodate it, to excuse it, to rationalize it. Let us show it as the high interpretation of our true selves, the only interpretation of all that we are and may be; and prove to men that it can no more be reasonably rationalized, or accommodated to abstract science, or excused before the lower and distorted vision of the practical cynic of humanity, than the organic divine Man himself.

"Si nous avons un système de vérités à croire," says Père Laberthonnière,[1] "c'est parce que nous avons une vie surnaturelle à vivre et que ces vérités en expriment à la fois les conditions et les éléments. Et pourquoi en effet croyons-nous en dernière analyse, pourquoi l'humanité a-t-elle cru, si ce n'est pour vivre et en vivant? N'est-ce pas là le motif essentiel, le motif primordial qui anime tous les autres? On parle incessament de tradition. Mais de l'ensemble de la tradition, ce que se dégage, n'est-ce pas qu'à travers les siècles, avec des manières de parler et de penser souvent fort différentes, les hommes ont cru parce qu'ils trouvaient dans la religion une réponse au problème complexe de leur existence, et parce qu'avec la substance que leur fournissait la foi ils

[1] *Essais de Philosophie Religieuse*, xxvi.–xxvii.

remplissaient le vide infini de leurs âmes? L'Évangile ne nous présente d'autre motif. 'Je suis la voie, la vérité et la vie.'"

But if we are to succeed in convincing men of the eternal relevance to life of our Gospel we must demonstrate to them now that we hold it, and know that we hold it, in earthen vessels of theology. We must show how our theology has changed along the centuries, we must show that it can change again. Men are rarely able to distinguish between the Gospel and the theology of the Gospel, or between the symbolic presentation of the eternal truth of Christ and the truth that it symbolizes. They are not really stupid about these things; but they are attending more carefully and earnestly to other things, and very many of them think they have rejected Christianity for good reasons. Let us present its truths to them anew; they will find a response in their hearts, which are as the hearts of other men and naturally Christian.

I believe that the greatest obstacle to missionary work in civilized England and the world is in the lack of adaptation of theology to our modern ways of thought. If we admit whole-heartedly that it needs to be adapted, if we take up our part in the work of its adaptation and proclaim frankly that the work is being done, we shall find that men assume a very different attitude towards us when we present again the eternal Christ, and show Him to them as not only the Truth, but *their* Way and *their* Life. This, I venture to urge, is the manner in which we may not only disarm an otherwise destructive criticism, but

prepare to return to the profound and penetrating simplicity of our Lord. We shall do this, not by abandoning reflexion upon Him and ourselves, not by carelessness about theology or metaphysics, or science, or philosophy, for all these come of the work of the divine man; but by thus distinguishing between the revelation of God as vision of the soul and response of the whole man to the immanent touch of God, and the intellectual efforts of men to formulate and systematize it. Let us tell the world openly what is of necessity being done. Then we can reasonably set before it the supreme enduring value, even to the world, of the Faith once revealed. We can go to it as those who have a treasure to give; we can once more be as a city set on a hill, not as men who are entrenched and hidden because they are afraid.

Part II

STUDIES IN INTERPRETATION

THE FALL OF MAN

A LITTLE while ago—that is, only some unknown number of millenniums ago—men began to live their life of personal magic on earth. My mind's eye looks through glasses shaped and coloured after the fashion of this age, and therefore I see our ancestors issuing from the cosmic dust of life as beings of many grades; and passing on, sometimes with long steps, sometimes almost imperceptibly, to be made men. I see a rise, a culmination, a great new beginning; and then even my glasses of this age cannot disguise from me the fact that in the most important, in the grandest, epoch of the rise I find the opportunity of an unprecedented fall. The king of animals at last lays hands upon the magical wand of his own life; and then there comes for him—so I see—the supreme trial of life. Without this picture of a real trial I cannot join the picture of ourselves as we are now with that of our more lowly ancestors—those who preceded the creature we may call first man—who were unable to have personal ownership of their life. They lived, but life was not their possession to develop by personal determination. There must have been a stage when hands of determining ownership were laid upon that sceptre for the first time, just as there must have been a stage when legs or wings were used in walking or in flying for the first time. We

men now undoubtedly hold it; our animal ancestors' claws and paws and hands were undoubtedly empty of it, in the form it takes with us; therefore there was a first occasion or group of occasions for grasping it. Of this I, at least, have no doubt; nor have I any doubts about the change that happened afterwards, perhaps before long.

To have become a *self-conscious, self-determining* being, however undeveloped and imperfectly recognized by himself his powers might be, meant both opportunity and ability in some small degree for the new man to shape himself, turn himself, mould his life, after a pattern conceived by himself. He, the last in the ascending race of animal life, became, as first of men, able to foresee himself in a mind's eye, although dimly and in a broken prophetic reflection, as possibly becoming other than he was; and to discover himself, by experiment, to be capable of making his ideal real. So he entered as ruler into the moral kingdom, the place of right or wrong. But here I know that I introduce other elements into the picture. "Pithecanthropos," I suppose, caught wavering glimpses of not only more than he could do, but more than he could refuse or determine to do. Anthropos both saw and acted—right and wrong—with a larger field for freedom. But he would not have been able to do or to see in this way of freedom, unless there were something in the universe and in himself from which the distinctions of moral right and wrong derive a meaning and a force, and from which the power of realizing freedom comes. So at this point I frankly confess *God*—in Anthropos and conse-

quently in lower grades of life preceding Anthropos; and I own that when I look at man as able to see outside himself and then within himself, recognizing relations of this and that, and going on to change those relations after an ideal pattern that he conceives; when I know him conscious of self-possession and world-possession, and determining with his magic wand the course of self and world, I see him in one and the same act meeting *God*, and determining, by consent or refusal to the "right" which he discerns, his growth in God—the expansion of the God-Man in him; or his arrest and contraction to a withering self, the self that would, if it could, become no better than Beast. I discover all this as I perceive the new man beginning to use his powers of self-determining life; but I discover too that in him this kind of life is at a crude beginning, and that, although he would feel a shadowy "ought," the tremendous ultimate meaning of his first—or of each, even the least—moral operation in him must have been hidden from him. We know something more of this meaning now, and poor although our knowledge may be, we know enough now to say definitely that God cannot be kept out of any frank and full discourse concerning the magical life of humanity. Let us, then, accept Him for the purpose of this discourse. If we do, there is no reason why I should not bring into it another and better description of the first man, proffered by William Law;[1] a description which has been in the background of my mind ever since I began this discourse. Law sets out by

[1] In *The Way to Divine Knowledge*.

supposing God to have "brought a new intelligent Creature into a new World." "As intelligent," he says, "it must partake of the Divine Understanding; as living, it must have a degree of the Divine Life; as good, it must have a Birth of the Divine Goodness in it; as an Offspring of Divine Love, it must have a Divine Happiness, for the Enjoyment of which the Love of God created it." I depict thus, in my mind's eye, "Pithecanthropos" newly become Anthropos. Law was depicting the Paradisiacal man of his mind's eye, an eye which looked through fitting spectacles of the day and hour. I see Anthropos with his wand poised, happy in a dawn of happiness no merely anthropoid ape can ever know, a happiness that had been wholly overclouded, although no doubt glowing behind its clouds, in the sleeping soul of Pithecanthropos, whom the Divine Breath had not stirred as it stirs the livelier soul. And I ask myself, as Law asked himself, how this newly, naively happy Anthropos, the Divine Child of earth, could lose his happiness. Pithecanthropos, presumably, enjoyed life ignorantly and innocently, at least no less than animal creatures still enjoy it; but his animal pleasure, as I conceive it, looks pale beside the happiness of a real *man* when the man as yet had not misused his power of man and vision of man. "Now there is but *one possible* Way," says Law, "for this intelligent Creature thus endowed, to fall from or lose the Happiness of its first creative State. It cannot knowingly choose Misery, or the loss of its Happiness: therefore, it can only fall by *such* an Ignorance, or *Power* of falling, as is consistent with

its perfect State. Now the Power lay wholly in the *Newness* of its Life: it only *began* to find itself an intelligent Being; and yet it had a Power of Looking with the Eyes of its Understanding either inwards, or outwards; upwards, or downwards." And in such a manner I, for my part and in my modern way, picture Anthropos, wand in hand, facing his own future and about to begin the shaping of his life and world. "It had a Power of *wandering* into Conjectures, and Reasons about *that*, which it *was* not," says Law. It had—and it has to this day. Anthropos, as he is now, can form ideals of himself as other than he is; and however feebly, slightly, incoherently his powers operated then, Anthropos in the beginning of manhood assuredly formed ideals as soon as he was stirred and set free by an indwelling recognizable Breath of God. "As a free, intelligent Creature, it could not be without the Power of thus turning its intelligent Eye; and yet as a beginning Creature that had no *Experience*, this Power could not be free from a *possibility* of wandering; and therefore its Power of wandering was not a Defect, but a necessary Part of its perfect State." The remoter and merely anthropoid progenitor of Anthropos seems in my picture unable to wander; as I see it, it could only follow with a single Eye the impulses of animal life. The attainment of a new perfection, even when that perfection was as yet only in its beginning, meant a beginning of new peril; it meant the inevitable peril of him who is called to the high privilege of the divine life wherein as a son of God he is free to seek God—if he will—and is there-

fore free to turn his eyes away. The sons of God cannot be compelled to God, because God is Love, and the only way to Him is the love that is a gift.

I, with my modern spectacles, discern in the "intelligent Eye" of which Law speaks the power of directing attention as a man directs it. By the direction of attention here or there, men now, as ever, determine their lives. They may turn the eyes of their mind from that which they ought, and know they ought, to see; and thus they may impose upon themselves a voluntary blindness to something they do not wish to see, and make a way to use amiss, and now as ever, their magic wand. In this manner of interpretation I see my Anthropos losing his happiness and falling into the sin of man, as every man falls; and I can say, with William Law, that "in this Possibility of wandering with its intelligent Eye, looking where it ought not, and entering into conjectures about *that* which *it was not*, may be clearly seen the Possibility of its falling from a State of high Perfection."

Law's Paradisiacal man and my Anthropos are in one and the same case. Both are in the high estate of those sons of God who may know and love Him. Both are new; both wield the sceptre of active, personal, self-determination in the freedom of an unrealized sonship. And for both there must be a sphere of operations in which temptation *to* God and temptation *from* God present themselves; else the Son, who should be free, would be under compulsion of circumstance in one way or the other. So I see Anthropos, with his dual outlook, facing occasions

that present some moral choice, some alternative of attention; and I see him—perhaps very soon, perhaps after a longer lapse of time during which he kept his new happiness—directing his attention away from the right so that it no longer keeps him from full view of the attractive wrong. I see his attention voluntarily directed to some narrow animal interest of the self in preference to a wider human interest; I see him self-blinded to the new and larger interest which has become visible to him; in fact, I see him *fall*, as William Law sees his Paradisiacal man fall, and as every man among us sees himself fall into sin. There is little, indeed, to choose between Law and myself, or between the pictures we make, except in the matter of the ancestral history of Anthropos and Paradisiacal man. In my picture the Creature rises by earthly as well as heavenly degrees to a lofty estate in which fall is possible; in Law's picture he comes out from God with no preparatory stages upon earth; and his earth-life (outside Paradise) is a consequence of his fall in Paradise. It is the difference between the twentieth century and many other centuries; I think it is no more. Law and I are looking through our different spectacles at human experience as it presents itself to us, and are trying to interpret it. That our interpretations are so much alike is satisfactory; it shows how unimportant a change of spectacles may be, in the last resort, when we are dealing honestly with truths of our experience. And either interpretation leads to the road of the Cross, as a necessity of man's estate if he would win the fulness of freedom in humanity. "Monter

jusqu'à l'humanité ou descendre au dessous, être homme ou être bête, se faire homme ou devenir bête. Le devoir n'est pas douteux, notre humanité même exige que nous soyons hommes. Mais cela ne peut se faire qu'à la condition de détruire en nous les tendances animales, les instincts inférieurs qui luttent contre les supérieurs. Il faut se tuer pour vivre, se perdre pour se sauver, donc se mortifier. Or, cela est dur, le chemin qui, de l'animalité, monte à l'humanité, est inévitablement la voie du Calvaire, la voie douleureuse et royale de la croix."[1]

[1] G. L. Fousegrive, *Le Catholicisme et la vie de l'esprit*, p. 14.

MIRACLE AND MYSTERY

THE conversion of water into wine is a miracle, the conversion of the wine of the Sacrament into the vivifying blood of Christ is a mystery. This is the ordinary Christian way of putting the matter, and it facilitates for us a short discussion of some points in the great question of miracles.

Monsieur Loisy, in his examination of the account of the Marriage at Cana given in the Fourth Gospel, has made irresistibly clear to many of us that in the scheme of the Evangelist the purpose of that account is not historical record but spiritual instruction. "La question qui se pose tout de suite," says Loisy, "devant le lecteur moderne, à savoir, s'il agit d'un fait réel, n'est pas ce qui préoccupait l'auteur. Pour lui, la vérité de la narration ne consiste pas dans son rapport avec la réalité matérielle d'un fait ancien, mais dans son aptitude à représenter sensiblement une réalité spirituelle."[1] The final outcome of critical inquiry by the modern reader guided by modern critics is that this miracle is one of the many that did not happen; but if the outcome had been otherwise, if criticism of documents and so forth had established it for him as a historical occurrence, the reader, if he were also a scientific man, or if he were possessed of the scientific spirit, would ask further

[1] Loisy, *Le Quatrième Evangile*, p. 284.

questions. Undoubtedly he would do his best to bring the event into line with the rest of his experience—he would ask, for example, whether it could have been misunderstood as a savage might misunderstand wireless telegraphy. But if patient and thorough investigation showed that something really had occurred which could not by any means be brought under known scientific law, something which, for example, increased the amount of physical energy in a closed system—it would be the law and not the event that would have to go. These laws are only shorthand summaries of experience, and if an event happens in experience which in its phenomenal aspect cannot be included in the summary that should include it (according to previous experience) the fact destroys the law—that is, for the scientific man. He never sets up—scientifically—a limit to the kinds of possible natural events and to the range of experience. In this respect his mind would, or should, be as open as the child's or the savage's. Anything *may* happen. He only asks whether it does; and when he is satisfied that it does it becomes for him material for science; it is "natural," and to be brought under "natural" law even if an old law must make room for a new one in order that it shall. Uniformity is the sacred thing, not scientific or "natural" law. And experience is a fundamentally sacred thing. Events derive their sacred character from the worship of truth in experience; and uniformity, as a canon, has been set up through the unbroken continuity of experience—the well-tested continuity, as scientific and plain men

discover it. One by one, and group by group, miracles, appearing ostensibly to be breaches of this continuity and uniformity, as it is known, have broken down under investigation. Difficulty has consequently been piled upon difficulty; and now doubt has almost imperceptibly passed, for modern men, for many of them even when they are religious, into disbelief. Evidence to convince such men, when they see the difficulties, is not forthcoming.

Into a world of men in this mind the historical and literary critics have brought new light, as well as a great relief to the religious ones among them. Aided by the psychologists, they have not only confirmed and crowned the scientific process of investigation, but they have reinstated miracles, not as breaches of uniformity but as possessed of vital significance. Many of the miracles that did not happen have entered the orderly and important scheme of human operations, and the organic structure of a common human experience. They now show to religious men the work of God in and with men ; and for modern Christians those of Christian history have become a sacred language in which the revelation of God is handed down to us. We see that for us they are hieroglyphs of the prophets in whose experience God revealed Himself after a wonderful manner. We recognize in them very precious and eloquent parts of the record of a supreme and normative experience of God by men.

Our quarrel with the men of science on this score is at an end. We, too, are become men of science, inasmuch as we have taken possession of their truths.

And, furthermore, although they may not go with us in all our way, although they may not recognize, as we do, the supernatural interpenetrating all the natural in men, and may also very justly and reasonably refuse to pass, as scientific men, beyond the phenomenal plane of things, still they can have no quarrel with us because we do not refuse. They have nothing, they can have nothing, to say from the side of science against our mysteries, against religious experience, against prophetic vision and divine revelation. If I say that not only man but God communicates with, touches, impels my mind, myself in my secret depths—sometimes even by help of bread and wine—who shall contradict me? Certainly not the man of science. He, too, knows mystery—there is that unfathomable business, the crooking of my finger; there is that equally unfathomable business, my writing of these words; there is, perhaps (and above all in practical religious significance for our day), "the communication of mind with mind otherwise than through the recognized organs of sense," and in the subconscious processes of mind. There is, indeed, unfathomable mystery for every scientific man, not only in the "flower in the crannied wall," but universally throughout experience. And—speaking strictly according to the stricter school of scientific men—we may always ask him to remember that he has given up causation, with purpose and meaning, as not of his affairs. If it were possible to prove to him the actual occurrence of a breach in our customary and recognized experience—let us say the reanimation of a corpse by a direct intervention

of some being possessed of powers unexampled before in the range of experience upon earth—he would only have to enlarge his view of experience; the causation here would be no more, although no less, unfathomable by him than in the crooking of my finger.

It is only lack of evidence that hinders scientific men from accepting every miracle in the Scriptures and elsewhere as events that must be summarized under law. All appear as occurrences in the phenomenal plane, and only as such occurrences would they be subject-matters which mere scientific men need consider. But my religious mysteries are wholly beyond them, like the one mystery that overshadows everything they do; they cannot be fitted into the scientific scheme.

Are we to say, then, that all these things are miracles? Is the mystery of causation miraculous? Is the mystery of bread and wine and my inner experience of God miraculous? Are these to be called the miracles that happen; and are those others, which are the hieroglyphs of the prophets and symbols and instruments for all Christian men, to be called miracles that did not happen? It is one way of putting the matter, but not the best. It has its value in compelling reflexion; but it is too paradoxical, even too confusing; it is not good for use in serious discussion. I used it myself for a discussion of the paradoxical sort in which I spoke of the modern position (and my own) in this manner:—[1]

"Matthew Arnold pointed out that miracles 'do not

[1] *An Agnostic's Progress*, p. 87 and ff.

happen'; we point out with equal decisiveness and greater cogency that miracles have always happened, and are happening every day. 'Dost thou not see,' says Carlyle, 'that the true, inexplicable, God-revealing miracle lies in this, that I can stretch forth my hand at all, that I have free force to clutch aught therewith?' We are linking now with this everyday miraculous power of man the miracles of all the ages; and we have discovered in man's depths powers undreamt of, yet at work, which are the root and source of miracle, miracle of 'just and unjust,' and of God and man, miracle which sets in new light for us those which, as a matter of premature judgment by Arnold and the men of his generation, did not happen.

"Hume's well-known definition of a miracle runs thus: 'A transgression of a law of nature by a particular volition of the Deity or the interposition of some invisible agent.' But, as one of the Cambridge Essayists pertinently remarks: "If the nineteenth century contributed nothing else to this discussion, it did at least demonstrate the inadequacy of this definition. Nothing (at least from the scientific point of view)," he goes on, "can be added to Huxley's trenchant criticism in chapter VII. of his 'Essay on Hume.' 'Nature,' to the man of science, 'means neither more nor less than that which is; the sum of phenomena presented to our experience, the totality of events past, present, and to come. Every event must be taken to be part of nature until proof to the contrary is supplied. And such proof is from the nature of the case impossible.'"

"If an event is an event, it is a natural event: that is the summing-up of science. The scientific question as to a miracle is, Is it an event? Did it, or does it, in fact, happen?

"'To sum up,' says Huxley, 'the definition of a miracle as a suspension or a contravention of the order of nature is self-contradictory, because all we know of the order of nature is derived from our observation of the course of events of which the so-called miracle is a part. On the other hand, no conceivable event, however extraordinary, is impossible; and therefore, if by the term miracles we mean only 'extremely wonderful events,' there can be no just ground for denying the possibility of their occurrence.'

"This is, of course, the agnostic attitude towards miracles. I held it, and I hold it still; but saying this I must also say that for me now God and man are natural, although they are supernatural in regard to the 'nature' so called of bodies and occurrences in a scientific scheme. Their manner of working miracles appears ordinarily *as the manner of natural law* in the phenomenal realm, although they are above and beyond it. If I use the word miracle (as I must) I use it (for myself) to indicate such efficiently causative operations of man as are involved in my giving purposive expression of my meaning in these written words, and in the ordinary presentation of myself in my bodily aspect here upon earth among my fellow-men. I use it also when I speak of the operation of God, the all-embracing efficient cause, of which all phenomena in their 'natural'

order seem to me effects; but I do not use it when I speak with my scientific or plain fellows concerning this chain of mere antecedence and sequence which we observe and discuss scientifically, or speak of in ordinary everyday fashion. For the discussion of our knowledge of things that are in common and in science, I concede the whole chain of linked antecedents and consequents in 'nature' as not only 'natural' but non-miraculous; but living experience —experience of the golden tree of life—I must call miraculous, provisionally and until all miracle shall be done away and God Himself be manifest as most natural. Herein I take part, as to the 'naturalness' of the mere phenomenal aspect, with the scientific agnostic, for whom nature is 'that which is,' and 'that which is' is nature. Indeed, I do not differ from him except in my recognition of a larger 'that which is,' and in the inferences I draw from it. And obviously, if science has nothing to do with efficient cause, or with purpose and meaning and value, it has nothing to do—at present—with my miracles or with God's, seeing that its analysis is inadequate to reveal their *modus*, and deals only with the 'natural' outward look of what is produced by the miracle-worker. . . . 'The spirit of man,' says Montaigne, 'is a great worker of miracles'; but when the scientific man looks into the miracles he himself is working, he finds his own part in them unintelligible. It is, apparently, scientifically impossible to pass from the movements of my pen to my awareness of those movements, and scientifically absurd to take account of my direction and inspiring of those movements

to an end of which I am not only aware but prophetically aware. Nevertheless, I go on writing, and go calmly in possession of my miracles before the whole scientific world, while 'God, if there be a God,' is majestically in possession of His."

I am still of this opinion, but if I were rewriting the passage I would alter its wording. There are no miracles for me in the scholastic sense, or in the sense of Hume; there is no law for me in either of those senses. I see marvels and mysteries everywhere in the operation of God and of man; but I will no longer confuse discussion by using one word for both the many kinds of events I see, and the events I do not see. Hume and the Schoolmen have had their way; and a miracle, for ordinary discussion, is not the same as any mystery; nor necessarily the same as a work of God; still less is it the same as the work of men.

"A miracle, by definition," says Father Tyrrell, "must be intelligible as to the substance of the fact—as intelligible as the uniformity to which it is the exception—the only mental difficulty it presents is one of causal explanation, not of description."[1] The conversion of water into wine, if it occurred, would be a plain affair, except as to its causation; the group of phenomena which a chemist would summarize under the symbol H_2O would have become associated with other phenomenal groups which he would summarize under the symbol C_2H_5OH and other more elaborate atomic pictures. The chemist would see nothing unnatural here, and if the physicist were to step in

[1] *Through Scylla and Charybdis*, p. 179.

with an inquiry, limited to the matter before him taken as an unclosed system, it would amount only, if it succeeded, to setting out the phenomenal series of co-existences and sequences in water and the groups of added phenomena which make water into wine, in such a way as to enable him to state the manner in which they appeared to him, or rather would have appeared to him, according to his opinion, had he been present as mere physicist.

On the other hand the mysteries of religion are inaccessible. They reach the foundations of life and stretch forth with its promise and its purpose. The touch of God within me, whether it involve the subsidiary mystery of sacramental means and symbols, or come as it comes to the prophets, is deep and high and embracing. The phenomenal plane is only secondarily involved through change in me and in my changed way of working with it. I may burn at the stake in consequence of that change instead of serving cheerfully at Cæsar's court; but the scientific investigator cannot trace, or think of tracing, the ultimate and initiating influence that brought about that change as an influence itself marked in the phenomenal stream of happenings. As martyr or as courtier the phenomenal aspect of my doings will be matter for science, as "neurosis" they will march side by side with "psychosis" in me; and so my mysteries will have worked out into the phenomenal plane for the historian, and be indicated for the physiologist in supposed neural change; but as mysteries the touch of God and the influence of the indwelling Spirit remain matters of my secret and

initiatory experience; and, although of experience, they are not matter for the science which is mapping out the phenomenal aspect of experience. These hidden things are not miracles; they are not intelligible in the sense that a fact in the phenomenal plane is intelligible; and their difficulty is not merely one of causation—it is a difficulty of the impossibility of clearly perceiving manner and means, a difficulty of knowing the *how*, which is different in kind from that which exists for science in its investigation of phenomenal change. No man, not even he who experiences a spiritual occurrence, or a revelation, has more than "a dim and many-wise imperfect knowledge" of this *how*. "The mystery," says Tyrrell, "which religious dogma formulates, purports to be a truth belonging to a plane of reality above and beyond that which is subjected to man's scientific and historic inquiry; a truth which can be known dimly, but which cannot possibly be known clearly by him under his present limitations; a truth which, being necessarily formulated in the terms of things which belong to the lower plane, defies exact expression and perfect intelligibility." [1] And so the contrast between the mystery of the sacramental wine—the mystery of the communication of God to man—and the miracle of Cana (if it were established for us as an event that really happened) is clear enough to see. Henceforth I will not use the one word miracle for conjuring tricks, for the signs and wonderful works of man and God, for spiritual mysteries, and for the pictorial and symbolic language of our fathers and ourselves. I

[1] *Through Scylla and Charybdis*, pp. 156–7.

will try to show more plainly which of these things I mean in particular cases, and to find out which other people mean; and I will endeavour to convince those with whom I discuss them that if I confess to the miracles that did not happen, it is rather to emphasize, and certainly not to deny, the supernatural character of human life.

"Être chrétien," says Père Laberthonnière,[1] "ce n'est-pas ajouter à des pensées et à des actes naturels des pensées et des actes surnaturels; mais c'est donner un caractère surnaturel à toutes ses pensées et à tous ses actes. C'est comme une élévation de tout notre être à une nouvelle puissance."

[1] *Essais de philosophie religieuse*, p. 211.

THE EARTH AND THE FULNESS THEREOF

THE stuff of earth, the material body, which clothes us just now, has its own needs as well as the meaning which we win from it and share. We recognize this; we allow for it. We tend, as well as animate, this clothing; we renew it with bread, and we sustain it and keep it clean and fresh with water. It is mysterious stuff, whether in our bodies or outside them; scientific men examine it, study its properties, classify its kinds, experiment with it, theorize upon it; and the mystery of it remains. This does not surprise us; stuff which we can make one with our mysterious selves must be mysterious stuff. The bread which we build into our bodies, the water which makes up the greater part of them, are both unfathomed mysteries—like ourselves. "If thou eatest a piece of bread," says Paracelsus, "thou dost taste therein heaven and earth and all the stars." The roots of bread and of water go where our own roots go, into depths which are not only unfathomed but unfathomable, depths of the abyss of God. They have their kind of life; we have ours; but our manner of possessing life is not the same as theirs. Indeed, we cannot strictly use such words as "have" and "possessing" in reference to these creatures of water and bread: we *have* life; they *are* life which

may become ours and is always God's. So we see clearly that we incorporate life with our lives when we feed our bodies. Even when we cleanse our bodies we cleanse them with life. What else should we expect? We cannot conceive how any dead thing could be made of a piece with ourselves in life as the things of earthly stuff are of a piece with ourselves. This is not fanciful nonsense; it is good sense of science and philosophy, as well as wisdom of the mystics—and any man may find out that it is if he will. "It is much truer," says Dr. James Ward, "it is much truer to say that the universe is life than to say that it is a mechanism." When we say that it is a mechanism we are speaking the language of abstraction and idealizing; when we call it life we are speaking the language of reality, concrete reality, which is neither split up into imaginary dead things for our practical economy of science, nor mistaken for dead things in the blundering of unskilled reflexion. It is not in our primary intuition to call the earth-stuff dead; this is the mistake of a reflexion which has not yet gone far enough to come to harmony with primary intuition. The savage sees life everywhere, like some philosophers; and he worships wood and stone like some philosophers, because they are alive and mysterious, and may be very powerful for good or for evil. That other is a very false and injurious superstition which cuts off from the world of life a dead part. The world is one in all its differences, because it is God's world which He holds, not in the hollow of His Hand, but in His Heart. The wood and the stone, the bread and the wine and the water, are all

within His Heart, and are all vitally His among the innumerable differences of His all-including unity of love. If, on the contrary, really superstitious men are right in saying that the wood and stone are dead, God is not the all-embracing God, but only one Being among many rival beings who exist outside Himself.

There have been times in the world's history when this superstition could be held by instructed men; those times are gone by now, and partly because science has made clear to us that the wood and the stone are not still things, but are full of movement and power—unresting movement, power in almost incredible quantity; and because the philosophers are teaching us that it is not possible to think of them as mere machines when we think of them as real, although it is both possible and wise to make calculations about them *as though* they were machines. So stable, we see, is the divine unity of existence, which is their place and ground, as to admit safely of these abstractions. Both science and philosophy, moreover, point explicitly or implicitly to this divine unity, in pointing to the abiding interconnexion of things which maintains the world together from within. So we may reasonably worship the wood and stone which dwell within the Heart of God, because they are His, and because worship has many grades, and is due in some appropriate grade to everything that is of God, although in its highest grade it can be given only to Him whom as yet we see in a mirror darkly, but least darkly and most significantly in our fellow-men. We may well worship the bread we eat; we are

either ignorant or infidel men when we do not. Its movement and power are God's; and therefore we, who are also His, are able to be conjoined with bread in an interaction of life. For the same reason we may well worship ourselves as "God's beasts"—and sons. There are differences and modes, but there is only one life, the life which is in God. In all its grades it is worshipful; but it is more than likely that we should not have known this and been able to feel of one sympathetic mind with "the heathen in his blindness," but for the tenacity with which Christian men of old both held to the unity of things, and also rejected an abstract materialism on the one hand and an abstract spiritualism on the other. They did not always know what they were doing—that is plain; but they were pledged to belief not only in the resurrection of man's body, but in the related sacramental system generally They were all baptized with water "for the remission of sins," and their souls were fed and made jubilant with bread of heaven and earth and living wine. Thus they always had before them an object-lesson which was wanting to the rest of the world. What, said the rest of the world, have dead water and bread and wine to do with the soul? And often enough, too often, the Christian men gave but a poor and foolish answer to the world's question, although they held on their way with souls cleansed and nourished through the help of those mysterious dead-looking things which were alive, and which bore to them power of God to add to power of God within themselves. The sacramental system saved men from being overcome by

superstitious belief in a world of dead and isolated things. These sacramental things, at least, they were compelled to say, are not dead; *this* bread and *this* wine are filled with power from on high; *this* water is used by God, and is His fitting instrument and symbol.

Nothing, after such an experience, could seem to them wholly common or unclean; the whole material world was sanctified and ennobled in some measure through the sanctification of the bread and wine, and by the use of water in the divine-human process of the "remission of sins." A body that is truly a man's and truly rises with him is well matched by these instruments of the sacramental process in life; and the man who would be either abstract materialist or abstract spiritualist, yet Christian as well, must be hard put to it for rationality and coherence in his thought. So, along the ages, Christian men, consciously or unconsciously, willingly or with reluctance, have borne unfailing witness to the organic unity of the world, themselves, and God. And now, in this fulness of time, the whole world of things and every single thing is presented before the Christian in new terms as wrought in organic unity of life. The water that cleanses his wonderful body does its work by expenditure of power; its solvent action is action indeed—the chemist tells him—and change and interchange go on within that process in which it sweeps away impurity. The stone that lies on the ground lies there in virtue of a mysterious operation which we can only name and guess about, a power that also keeps the suns and stars together; the

quiet-looking stone is not still within itself, it is vibrating, pulsing with inward power, now at one rate, now at another, in response to a power that comes upon it. The whole of which all these are parts is one, a true whole, and nothing lies separately, indifferent, outside it. The whole palpitates with power and movement, and one thing is at one with another; it shares in the common life which is the life of God. We call the life by other names—sometimes we restrict the name of life to certain high grades of it, our human life, or the plant's—but many grades of life to which we refuse the name are, in plant and ourselves, so wrought into conjunction with the undeniable life that is ours or the plant's as to be intelligible only when regarded as in a community of kind, although with difference of degree. How can wholly disparate things be conjoined? A man cannot make a stuff with beauty for warp and wool for weft; nor can he build up into mutual relations dead water and bread with living body. Things which are to be united in interaction must have a common ground underneath their difference. And to this principle the scientific men point unwaveringly, if not always either consciously or willingly; while the Christian bears his witness, as he has always borne it, but now with a new understanding of what his witness means in the interpretation of a world of things. As to the relation of his witness to himself, to his mind, his soul, his heart, his own possessed life,—this is another matter. This rests on his inner experience. He knows when he meets power from on high and receives it to become

his own; or he may know if he will. Sacraments bear to him their own witness, a witness to themselves and to the nature of the world of which they are parts, as well as to the unifying, penetrating love of which they are the chosen vehicles. "God is not bound to His own Sacraments." True, but the Christian may well rejoice that along the Christian ages men have been bound to the Sacraments. They are symbols, he is told. True again; but they are symbols which convey that which they symbolize. They make a way for his co-operation with the ever-present, ever-pressing love and power of God; as his body of earth makes a way for his co-operation with his fellows and with God in his fellows and in the divine world. They are at least significant, arresting points, which focus the singular power of human attention—that mechanism by which man's nobility of manhood is both declared and exercised. God can do nothing with a man unless he attends to God; so, in His love and mercy, He has drawn men to attend, and to learn of His ways and the meaning of His world of things, by the sacred and sacramental use of obviously material things. Men must be "born again" into a life of conscious free co-operation with the good (which is the God) they can perceive; they must be set free and cleansed from the defilement of that narrow self-seeking which is death from God. There is but one way for all, although it is a way of many aspects; there is but one cleansing process, one baptism, whatever may be its disguise, for the remission of sins in this new birth into the divine life of co-operating sonship. So men are

everywhere being born anew of the Spirit, the one Spirit; and cleansing water works with the Spirit, is used, in one and the same act, by man and God, for symbol to the spirit of man—a symbol of power and truth and unity in life. God is not bound to this symbol; men are born again where the symbol is never seen or heard of, as they are where it is rejected in the ignorance which is not to be blamed, although it may wisely be deplored. When we survey the field of experience and of knowledge, the course of history, and the secret things of the soul, we may well rejoice that God's Christian people are bound to the symbol and to the sacrament, and have learnt to confess their faith in "one baptism for the remission of sins," and to eat the bread of life and drink the cup of salvation.

Behind the maintenance of all these things lies the instinct of universal continuity of life, a natural, profound instinct which no departmental pursuit of abstractions has been able to destroy, although in many men it has been weakened or disguised by some dominant abstractive interest. It is an instinct which is not merely childlike or savage, because we often find it verified when a man seeks to overcome the disability of abstractive study, when he philosophizes deeply and thoroughly, when he perseveringly tries to see things as they are. This instinct is accompanied by a corresponding sense of difference and contrast within the continuity of life. It seems to unspoiled intuition as certain that life contains different lives as that it is one; and these differences within life, manifest and ineradicable in the minds of

ordinary folk, justify both our abstractive sciences and common ways of speech. But there are modes of thought which cannot be called natural or child-like, for which continuity is everything, difference either nothing or illusive. These modes are fashionable now in the West; they are supreme now, as always, in the East. And against these, Christian practice and the Christian faith are effective protests. The living God is believed by Christians to contain distinctions and even differences within Himself, distinctions and differences which constitute, for Christian thinkers, a ground of the distinctions and differences that experience reveals, and the unspoilt instinct claims as of the very nature of the things which, nevertheless, partake of the unity of God.

THE RESURRECTION OF THE BODY

(From *The Contemporary Review*)

WHEN a pin pricks a baby, the baby wriggles and cries; but it wriggles all over, and its wriggles do not show us the place of the prick. It feels a pain, but it feels it in no particular spot of itself; the baby is a whole for which as yet few differences are mapped out — it cannot localize a prick as *here*, and not *there*. When a pin pricks me I can localize the lesion more or less well, according to the degrees of difference which I have learnt to distinguish in the region attacked. I know very accurately the map of my finger, but not nearly so accurately the map of my back. There are places on my back where two pins by no means very close together would seem to me to give only one prick. So the mapping-out of differences on my skin-surface is not the same everywhere; it is a matter of degrees. And when I was a baby the map did not exist for me at all; it had to be begun, and it had to be made by degrees. I learnt gradually to distinguish differences of place in myself; but all through the process of my learning I never made the mistake of thinking that these differences meant that I was really nothing but a mere mosaic of little bits of places. I am able now to distinguish marked differences in myself as a whole; but I do not picture

myself as constituted by quantities of little pieces, separate little pieces side by side, making up a patchy conglomerate. And yet there is a sense, a scientific and useful sense, in which my mapped-out differences may be regarded as such little separate areas of my surface; but the fact never troubles me. My own experience makes the wholeness, the identity in difference of my sensational relations, an established truth for me; and I can discuss these scientific areas without any tendency to look on myself as a mosaic.

Even more important as a lesson from my present experience of a pin-prick is the fact that I still feel it *all through me*, although no longer all *over* me. I feel it right through to the very inside of my "mind," so to speak; and I feel a wholeness of myself from the very inside of my "mind," as I call it, through and through to the "body" in the place where the pin pricks me; I know of no depth in myself where the pin does not prick. It is true that I may be so engrossed with other matters that I do not attend to such a trifle as a pin-prick; but whenever I do I feel it right through. From my utmost skin surface right into the core of my "mind" I recognize a oneness of susceptibility to the pin. So in this respect, too, I discover myself in experience to be a whole; although I talk about my "mind" and my "body" as separate things. The pin searches me out. And as I write down these words the action of writing searches me out. Right from within myself I find the conventional expression of my meaning being shaped forth in words upon the paper, words I write, words I select, words I hold together by a continuous thread

of my meaning, threading them like beads upon my string, the string that stretches from my depths through the whole organic unity of differences that I call myself, to my fellows in the greater social unity of which I am part. I know my wholeness in experience, and I know the differences within it too. I have learnt bit by bit to map them out and use them. When I was a baby I was a confused whole, now I am cleared up, differentiated for purposive, significant uses, which are my uses and purposes and express my meaning. I am not made up of separate pieces; I am neither a mosaic, nor a Siamese twin of a "mind" and a "body" incomprehensively side by side. Through all my differences there is wholeness, a wholeness always to be found in all the varieties of my own experience of myself and my own life; and the wholeness is my own, as are the differences.

But some things happen in experience which confuse its instruction for me. I touch one part of my body with another, and then body seems, on reflexion, so different as to be really separate from the mind that thinks of it. I look at other men's bodies, and I think about their minds, until I see a great gulf between a supposed "material" or "physical" body, and a supposed "spiritual" or "psychical" mind. Yet all the time the pin pricks right through from body to mind, and the voluntary action works out right through from mind to body; and everywhere in a living body "material" or "physical" changes are happening as they never happen in a body that is not living—although life, surely, is not

itself "material" or "physical." The process by which I come to think of body and mind as separate things is, after all, only a sort of guesswork. When I leave off guessing and turn to what I *know*, I find no separation, but only differences, many and great differences, within a unity which makes of them a real whole. The greatest difference of all is the difference between me and my sensations, or between me and my actions; it is the difference between *subject* and *object* in my experience. *I*, the subject; *feel-a-prick*, the object. There is a whole bit of my experience; but is it in two halves? Nothing of the kind. I try to think of *I* by itself, and *feel-a-prick* by itself. I cannot do it. They are indissolubly one; although the whole affair is dual, it is not divided. It is not two separate things. There is no sense about either part of it when taken alone. So I may learn that although there is *duality* in experience, I shall be quite wrong in cutting it in two halves and making what the philosophers call a dualism. The dualistic conception implies two separate things, the conception of duality implies difference within one thing. And the very greatest difference in me is not the difference between body and mind, but the difference between subject and object, the difference between *I* and *feel-the-prick*. All other differences are small compared with this, small, I mean, in the matter of presenting difficulty for thinking over. The difficulty that is associated with the words "body" and "mind" is a mere matter of the habitual mistakes and misunderstandings by which I make a dualism out of a duality, and cut in two that which is in real

truth always one. But the more one thinks of the other difference and the more one knows, the more insoluble and yet the more significant its problem seems; although it is not a problem of two things, but always a problem of one—like the problem of body and mind. Fortunately it is of far more practical importance just now to get rid of mistakes and misunderstandings about body and mind than to spend strength on the profundities of the other problem; and it is this that I wish to do. It is of high importance for me in relation to practical life to recognize that the bottom fact of experience is the oneness in duality of *I* and *feel-a-prick*, or *I* and *move-my-arm;* but I can set aside for the moment its difficulties and accept its help. I see that in discussing every problem of my life I need the conviction of wholeness, and of unity in difference—the one conviction that corresponds with experience. Then abstract studies, and scientific guesses, and popular delusions arising from them, must run off me like water off a duck's back. The rest I can leave to the philosophers.

Very well then, what shall I say now in the light of my unity about those familiar words "body" and mind"? And what shall I say about death? "Body" and "mind," I may pronounce to be mere abstractions; but they are false abstractions only if I do not know that I am making them, or if I use them in the wrong place: they are valid and useful for certain important purposes when taken as what they really are. For instance, the physiologist studies body by itself, and must study it by itself, if he is to

do his work well; the psychologist studies mind by itself, and cannot do otherwise; but there is a gulf between their sciences, as there is between the abstract "body" and the abstract "mind" they study. No longer does a pin prick all through the whole; there is no whole. The pin-prick is a jar of molecules for the physiologist; it is a sensation-of-pain for the psychologist; neither earthly nor heavenly power can bring those two disparate, incommensurate events together. Mind and body run side by side, these gentlemen say; body is physical, mind is psychical. They are of different orders of existence, nothing happening on one side can cause anything to happen on the other side. Thought cannot bridge the gulf between pin-prick and sensation-of-pain. See what a mess is here! This is because science is necessarily and wisely dualistic, while life is an organic unity. Let me recognize, then, this fact; let me remember that science has cut the organic unity in two for purposes of study; and then I shall cease to be surprised that the two halves refuse to join. *In real life and experience there are no halves;* there is no mechanical body on one side and purposive mind on another. The whole affair is purposive, and full of meaning right through. It is all alive, even that part of it which allows, in some degree, of a mechanical interpretation for the purposes of science. The physical part of the living world submits to this interpretation while it is taken apart from its context in the whole; but set it with its context and that interpretation collapses. The fact, for instance, that the complex molecules of my body undergo, while I

am alive, building-up and breaking-down changes useful to me for my purposes, although they only run down, down, down, in quite another fashion, when I am dead, is wholly inexplicable on the mechanical and dualistic hypothesis. This, again, is because I am a purposive, significant whole, an organic unity in difference, and not a body with a mind inside it, or even (what is more like being true) a mind with a body inside it.

Dualism is the primeval curse of guessers; from the plainest of plain men up to Professor Haeckel, who flees from it with too hasty steps. Assuming, for the moment, that it has been swept out of my own way, and that I know I am an organic unity in duality; what shall I say, under philosophical guidance, about death?

There surely, at last, is something that looks like the triumph of dualism. There and then, surely, the unity of experience must be cut in halves. But let me wait a moment. What about the pin-prick and the sensation-of-pain—that insuperable difficulty for scientific men? What about those material molecules, which, while the dead man was alive, were built up against the stream of mechanical running-down, and so reduced scientific thoughts and schemes to impotence and inadequacy? Both are gone. Pins may prick; but there is no sensation-of-pain; and all the molecules are running down, down, down, with no paradoxical life to stop them. Circumstances have evidently changed. How have they changed? Is this collection of running-down molecules still the man's body? That is the crux of

the whole question. I, personally, am bold enough to affirm that it is not. I am not to be misled by mere size of change. The process of change, of which this death is the largest example, has been going on all the man's life. Much more than the total aggregate of these tumbling molecules here present has been shed from him before; and neither then nor now in this death, did he lose—so I think—his body. He has been shedding tumbling molecules all his life. This time he has shed all there were in a lump, at once; but he has shed the amount of other complete "body" aggregates before, over and over again, although hitherto always in bits at a time. The whole thing was bread-and-butter once and it will be bread-and-butter again. Between whiles it has been useful to him; it has been built up into him; and its life (in its low grade) has been conjoined with all the higher grades of his life—for some special purpose, as I hold, which doubtless is partly his own purpose, within the greater universal purpose which keeps all life one. As mere aggregate of tumbling molecules, in its present condition, it is not his body; as aggregate of molecules which he once kept from tumbling it was used in his body; it was built up as a body for earth out of earth, and held to himself for earthly schemes in his nearer, closer body—in that "spiritual" or pneumatic body of which St. Paul speaks in contrast with this temporary "natural" body. The natural body was used, and through it the natural world was used, by the man; and so men and things were brought into relation with him in this earthly natural sphere of supernatural life—

this primary school. But I take it that all the real inner truth which the aggregate of molecules ever had for him goes on with him, because it was received into a continuous, coherent life, and is there built up permanently, in order that so it may go on to be fulfilled in his immortal conscious personal existence, and so aid in his fulfilment of himself. The aggregate of tumbling molecules doubtless has in its lower grade another immortality, but it is not that of a "body," which can exist only as the body of a being whose body it is, and must be a part within his greater whole. The immortality of scattered particles can only be of another kind (so far as one can speak of it as immortality at all); these particles, being rooted in God as we are, must go on in some way; but as body for a body-holder they have said their say, and their say remains recorded beyond themselves. When I speak of the immortality of the *earthly* body I think of the special share which as body the meaning of those particles has obtained and taken in a man's immortality. The organic unity of life which is the man will, I suppose, carry on from the molecules it built up into a body all the meaning they have ever had and given and transmitted as body into him—all the truth, all the part they have played in the organic purposive life which is his, and which they have temporarily shared. The river of those molecules flows through every man's life from its beginning here to its departure hence, giving to it nourishment, and submitting to its use instrumentality—which fits his life-purpose. When he dies, this earthly part of its task is done; but it is

immortal in the permanence of its deeds and of its record in that immortal whole. And I take it that when the full meaning of the contribution of earth to the immortal whole is fully worked out, and a man has come to comprehension of himself as he is completed in the God-Man, then, indeed, at that final Judgement-day of conscious recognition, even his mere earthly body, in this utmost fulfilment of all its possibilities and relations to the higher grades of life, will be seen to have risen again, and in the fulness of its real, and once hidden truth, to be at last made known when the heavens and the earth are one.

And now, as I write these words, my mind's ear detects remonstrance. I am well aware that this is not what was meant by our creed-framers, or has ever been meant before our own day, by the belief in the resurrection of the body. And yet there is something else to say before I cut off my belief from the belief of the Nicene gathering of believers as a separate thing. Last night I was listening to the Moonlight Sonata, as it was played on one of the latest triumphs of the pianoforte-maker's art. This pianoforte is a marvel, with its depth and brilliancy of tone, its delicate response to the finest shades and variations of the player's mind, the artistic graduation of its pedal-work, the sustaining of its sounds; and I began to wonder what Beethoven would say if he could hear his work rendered in that magical way. But I did not wonder long; I knew he would say, That, just *that*, is what I meant. And it is after this fashion, I am sure, with all our growing, expanding interpretations of fundament-

ally simple truths. If we could have those Nicene bishops here and make them understand and feel, as we understand and feel, the meaning of our modern language and modern ways of thought, and the meaning of the knowledge and experience which have been piled up along the course of years, I am sure they would say, like Beethoven, That—*that* is what we meant.

It is one thing to lay intellectual hands on a fundamental and therefore simple, however profound, truth rooted in experience, a truth nothing can shake; and it is another thing to give it adequate expression and discover all that it means. It is one thing to bring out spiritual artistic treasure from the stores of divine beauty in the soul, and it is another to have that treasure "clothed upon" in a fitting garment of earth. So Beethoven may still have to wait for even more than Steinway, and the Nicene fathers for more than the twentieth-century thinkers, to express and to fulfil the meaning of their work. And yet, from age to age and step by step, the meaning does come out more and more fully; and it finds, age by age, new vehicles to bear it, each fitted to the age.

The Nicene fathers spoke from their human depths, from the roots of experience. There they found an unshakable conviction of man's wholeness, just as I find it if I will. They knew, as I know if I will, that a bodiless man is not a man at all. Very likely this knowledge of experience did not accord with their philosophizing or their guesswork; very likely many of them cut their own life in two for

reflective and speculative purposes as lightly or as solemnly as we do. But when it came to the heart-searching business upon which they were engaged I am sure that such embroideries upon experience fell away, and that they were thrown back on themselves, and on Him who was to them the supreme divinely-embodied Truth. There, too, in Him, something came to meet and match, even while it overpassed, their own experience. So in face of a dualistic world they boldly spoke out the plain, simple, unexplained truth of their experience and of the experience of Christ, in the baldest, simplest words. Put it in this mere human way—or put it on the other hand, that in the inmost soul, when the soul trusts God and itself, the Divine Spirit finds an effective welcome and co-operation and His opportunity of revelation—either way will do. And now in the twentieth century we have philosophers, all the best philosophers, beseeching us to trust experience, to go back to the organic unity of life which it proclaims, and cease from our dividing tricks, as those men ceased. They do not think of the matter as the creed-framers did, but they point to the same thing in a different way, and show us our common ground.

In every age our personal and common social experience and our knowledge of the truth of experience need, call for, must have, appropriate expression. There is always persistent truth in it for us; but our statements of it may easily come to seem false, because the garments in which we clothe it, being woven of our knowledge of other things,

are become either outworn or grotesque. The great work of this age in relation to what is called dogma is to make appropriate commentary on the primitive simple statements of experience which, under commentary now inappropriate, have come down to us along the ages, and still find response, if they are understood, in our own hearts, and even in our heads. Some men of old said they believed in God; and ever since, along the ages, some men have said they believed in God. It is a permanent, simple, even *bald* way of expressing a truth of experience. But we all know that the word God is one of the most difficult words in the language. We know that it is harder to fill out that word with meaning in our commentary, than to fill out with meaning in the same way the other word, *body*, which I have been discussing. We know that there is as wide and deep a difference between the meaning we attach to the word God and the meaning the Nicene fathers attached to it, as there is between the meaning of "body" and of "the dead" which I state for myself, and the meaning which of old men attached to these terms. And yet—and yet—they and we appeal to the same ultimate root of belief,—our own selves, our own God-supplied life. We and they mean the same thing; but we have a different context to set it in, a different range of knowledge within which to view it; so we must see it and say it otherwise—although always and everywhere it is and means the same thing. So I can say that I believe in God and in Man (which implies for me both divine and embodied man); and if I could find an old Nicene

father of a mind not unsympathetic with mine I am sure that, despite the differences in our commentary, he and I would soon come to agree that we mean one and the same thing when we say that we "look for the Resurrection of the dead, And the life of the world to come."

PRAYER

RIGHT praying is an act of co-operation between God and ourselves; but we are always working with Him even when we pray wrong prayers —if only we pray them in the right way. The one kind of way in which we can fail to co-operate in some degree with God in prayer is when we not only pray wrong prayers but pray them in the wrong way. So there is evidently a very large field for the fruitful praying that is not only answered (as all true prayer is, whether good or bad) but always furthers the coming of the Kingdom of God, and the doing of His will. There is, however, a fruitful praying which is the outcome of blind self-will; most often it has the form of work, of striving the wrong way; and this is bad praying of bad prayer. Both its fruit and its answers are of a fitting kind. They belong to what we call *hell*, that is, to the state and condition of loss and poverty and wrath to which we condemn ourselves when we refuse to see the manner in which we ought to co-operate with Him who is our God. Even the worst prayer is never unanswered and unfruitful—prayer, bad or good, every effort and desire of man, is always powerful—and each and every prayer and effort and desire is answered and bears fruit *after its own kind.*

Having laid this down as a beginning, having recognized the great and unfailing power of prayer, of effort and desire, let us look more particularly at the immediate object of right prayer, that which belongs to and furthers the coming of the Kingdom and the doing of the Will of God. This object must be something that is a common object for God and ourselves, an object towards which the divine-human living and effective co-operation is rightly addressed. It must help forward the consolidation and the perfecting of the divine-human oneness, and the increase of the life in which God and man will some day be completely and perfectly harmonized. Experience shows God as self-communicating, as ever striving to give Himself to man and to fill man's capacity up to its utmost limits (if it has limits) with Himself—with His Power, His Wisdom, His Goodness, His Truth, and His sublime and all-embracing Love. This is what God shows us that He desires and strives after; and this is what we—poor, half-blind creatures as we are, beginners in the way of life and love—should be learning to desire and attempting, however feebly, to strive after in co-operation with Him. Therefore, when our right praying is answered it is answered by some new communication of God as Wisdom, or Power, or Goodness, or Truth, or Love, to us who have prayed aright, and through us to our brothers in the common life. By stretching out the hand of prayer we open up a way to ourselves for the self-communicating God, and to other men as incorporate with us. He is always waiting for this, ready to fill our hands and hearts and minds with Himself.

This is the way of the coming of His Kingdom, this is the object of prayer.

Its manner among us, the way in which we adjust ourselves or do not adjust ourselves to its object and its nature, is a matter to be thought about. We evidently pray a great deal more and a great deal less than we think we do. Very often we are praying when we think we are not, and not praying when we think we are. Every kind of seeking is, of course, a prayer—that is the meaning of talking about work as prayer. Ordinary work-a-day work really is prayer, although not the only kind. With it we seek something that is God's and (as we believe) may become ours; and when we seek it rightly, in the humility of right work adjusted to the conditions under which both we and the thing we seek are placed, our work-prayer is answered in the gift by God to us of that which we seek, and the corresponding gain to us of more of Him in ourselves, of His power by which we work, of His wisdom by which we work aright, of His life thus expressed and conveyed. Our daily material bread comes to us, not merely because we say "Give us our daily bread"—if we stopped short there we should certainly receive no bread—but because we pray work-prayers aright and open up the right way, the one and only way in which God can give us our daily bread without pauperizing us, without merely providing us with food as machines and not men. There may be degrees and different kinds in our work, but for daily bread there should be daily work of some kind, as St. Paul well knew. If by our perverse ingenuity we evade this condition

we are pauperized more or less by the misguided help of our fellows. Then we lose God, more or less, under these present conditions of earth and earthly food, and of our primary school where we have to learn our primary lessons of a dependence that is no slavery, and a manhood that God will not lessen. The daily work, then, for the necessary bread, is in its way prayer, and when it is linked with the prayer of the heart that knows God as the giver of all bread it is raised up to the level of His throne. But even without that lifting up the work is prayer, and it is answered by God both with the gift of His bread and with the gift of so much of Himself as the worker makes place for and will receive, whether he be unaware, or know what he does and seek with open eyes of the soul as well as of the body. When Professor Dewar, at the Royal Institution, humbly submits to the conditions of the divine power in hydrogen, and, devotedly seeking the right method of approach, sets to work powers of God become his own, and directs them in order to obtain this hydrogen in a liquid state, he is co-operating with God; and, as co-operating, he succeeds, and his prayer is answered. It may be that Professor Dewar would not call liquid hydrogen an answer to his prayer; it may be—I know nothing about this—that he does not always lift his humble, careful, and effective work-prayer to the throne of the King by uniting it with the prayer of a heart that seeks and loves God Himself in personal relations. Nevertheless the liquid hydrogen is the gift of God to Professor Dewar and through him to all of us and this gift

is made possible by his co-operation with God, who is always ready and waiting to bestow, but cannot bestow unless we will actively respond by knocking and seeking and asking in appropriate ways. This, then, is an example of one kind of prayer which we may pray without thinking that we are praying at all. It is hardly necessary to do more than mention the innumerable prayers of the tongue which are no prayers. They stand out visibly, conspicuous in their want of real seeking, real longing or heart-felt desire and energy, reality of any kind. These things are not of God at all, no more than is the bad, useless, perfunctory work of the hand or brain, which is likewise a mere sham and show of reality, a pretence of seeking. Yet it is not true that these sham seekings bear no fruit; every occurrence in and around man bears fruit, and the fruit of this tree is like itself in its effect upon the man. He is the worse for sham prayers, for sham work; and his own loss and ours, his own degradation and ours, is the answer to them. God is not mocked, even by a mockery. Even a prayer that is no prayer is answered. There is no escape from God and ourselves; our unrealities and our sins are written down by our own hands (behind which are the hands of God) in a writing which some day we shall read, and see to be both our own and His.

There are real, earnest prayers, not for bread alone but for other corruptible treasures, which often seem to go unanswered and sometimes grow into important problems for us. Such prayer, or rather the problem of such prayer, comes into the mind of most of us almost

as soon as we think of the subject at all. There is the question of the prayer of faith for the sick; what are we to say about that? The mystics say that the eye of faith and the eye of reason are not really two, but one turned two ways. At least they should work together, supplement each other. Let us suppose that a man sees a child lying asleep right in the track of an avalanche. If he stands still and prays, he will be praying the prayer of presumption not faith, because faith should work by knowledge. His prayer, even of presumption, *might*, of course, rouse the child, say by "telepathy," but he has no business to count upon it. His right prayer is by means of his muscles and the divine power given him to use them; but the prayer of the heart should go with this, no doubt, and will go, if he has the prayer-habit. The eye of faith and the eye of reason should be at one. Let us take, for another example, a case of typhoid fever, and suppose that we know the internal condition of things and see that death is as certain as the avalanche, that the time has gone by when we might look for the effect upon bodily processes which we work voluntarily or involuntarily through the nervous system and circulation, and by which we so often work what we call miracles of recovery. Would it, under these circumstances, be our business to pray for recovery? Probably not; this also seems a prayer of presumption. But why do we think it a prayer of presumption? Because (on our hypothesis) we know by experience the manner of the Will of God in these matters; because the eye of faith should and may become one with the eye of reason.

But there is more to be said than this. Are we to pray for things only when we do *not* know how they are habitually ordered by God? Are we to let knowledge and experience narrow the sphere of our petition? Certainly not; they should enlarge it, they should also change it, and change it very much. The "philosophe inconnu," Louis Claude de Saint-Martin, says of this matter:—

"Observe here that in the prayers which God has recommended He has not told men to ask for what may not be granted to all; He promises only what is compatible with His universal munificence, which has reference to universal wants and His universal glory. When we ask God for particular things which cannot be given to all our fellow-creatures alike . . . we depart essentially from our law. . . . We ought to ask incessantly for things of the real and infinite world in which we were born, because nothing can come upon a man from that world without thereby opening the way for it to descend upon all.

"In the prayers recommended by God to men the first thing asked for refers to God and His Kingdom, that it may come; only after this is Man considered.

"What is asked for, for Man, nowise refers to earthly things; the daily bread spoken of is not our elementary food, for Man has his hands to labour with, and the earth to till, and we are forbidden to be careful about the wants of our bodies, as the heathen are. . . .

"All in this prayer is Spirit, all is divine love, because its object generally is that divine harmony, to maintain which all must contribute."

The Unknown Philosopher takes us higher than prayers for recovery from sickness, higher even than prayer for earthly bread; he takes us far beyond all those things for which the Gentiles chiefly seek; and, like his Master, he would have us pray rather for the Kingdom not to be built up after the way of the world, and for the living bread that no mere labour of hands can drag out of earth. The way of work is the God-ordained manner of reaching things and processes of earth, the appropriate and appointed prayer. It is consecrated as prayer when the prayer of the Spirit is directed to those things of the more real life which we are to seek "*first*."

There is an appropriate manner of prayer in every manner of our co-operation with God, and when the eye of faith and the eye of reason are truly one we shall know them all. But every kind of prayer, here and now in ignorance, every prayer rightly prayed, is answered by a gift of God, a gift of Himself. Even when we pray wrong prayers, and do not know them to be wrong (although we shall know when we have received more light from God), even then, when we are asking for what He cannot give, we receive a full answer in the loving communication of God, the gift of Himself growing in ourselves in order that His Kingdom may come and His will be done in our divine humanity. And we may say with regard to prayers of petition for such things as recovery from sickness, or rain, or this or that of the kind, that if a man can pray for such things in reality and truth without losing faith when his prayer seems to fail, then he may and should pray for them. He main-

tains a right relation between himself and God when he does this, and when he does not he runs the risk of losing that relation. But if he cannot pray for them in reality and truth he must not try, he must not fret because he cannot, he must bear in mind that his inability does not necessarily mean a loss of the knowledge of God—it may mean an increase of that knowledge, a greater, fuller presence of Him in his mind, if not in his heart. And perhaps it may mean also at least as great a presence in his heart. For the eye of faith may see clearly, in the vision of the all-embracing love of God, that every word comes with power not only to *bear* new knowledge but to *rejoice* in it and to grow strong. This is one of the ways in which the Kingdom of God comes among us, this way of a revelation which teaches us in some fashion not to stand, as people say, alone, but to stand like men, in God and with God, like men who have their work to do for Him and with Him, work that He gives wholly into our hands to be done in His strength become our own. By the growing revelation of the manner of God's operation in natural things, in eclipses and rain and avalanches, and in the modes of death of the body, we have the opportunity for a great lesson. After all, are not these things as they affect us of the sort that moth and rust corrupt? Are they not of that kind after which the "Gentiles" primarily seek? Is not the inordinate desire for earthly goods, even for the continued earthly presence of those whom we love, an indication of short-sightedness on our part, spiritual short-sightedness, or even blindness? And while we

are learning both the manner of the power and of the limitation of God, as this is set by the marvellous perfection of His nature and His will in respect of these things, are we not learning that it is His will that in the prayer and longing of the spirit we should seek otherwise than do the Gentiles, and rather set our hearts and our treasure first and foremost in the enduring Kingdom that is for ever both God's and ours?

There seems a profound spiritual significance in this lesson which we are learning in a new form, this old lesson of Christian faith which now, perhaps, we are only beginning to learn.

"Seek ye *first* the Kingdom," this is the secret of practical religious life. "*First*," with inmost heart and service and search, with the supreme power of the spirit; and then, and subordinately, seek with those lower but co-ordinated powers of mind and sense and muscle, used in their right way, for the other things pertaining to life. No prayer goes unanswered, but the universal answer that comes to all prayer lies deep and is the more precious—it is of the secret Kingdom of God in us. Yet there are the other answers too; and there are those many manners of prayer, all right if honest, although not all successful in appearance, because not all enlightened and well-directed; and about these we have very much to learn. Part of our new learning will be the recognition of the way in which all action is prayer and may be lifted up into high and beautiful prayer if we will, a recognition of the universal co-operation of God with us, and of us with God, in

every operation of life. Absolutely, we can do nothing without Him, nothing whatever; all the power we have, and everything we seek with it, is His; so the right carrying-on of the whole of our life should be looked upon as bound up with prayer, with a recognition of the hidden bond that holds us in God, and should make all our operations sanctified in Him. Every good thing, every word of reason, every new beauty, every new truth, and every opening out of love, is an answer of God to our prayer. We forget this: we ignore both our prayer and its answer. Father Tyrrell says that, "as God is always serving us and labouring for us in Nature, and we do not recognise it, so He is continually speaking to our inmost heart, and we take the words as from nowhence or as from ourselves. 'There stands one in the midst of you whom ye know not.'"

THE LIMITATION OF GOD

I HAVE been turning over in my mind for many years the subject of the "limitation" of God; but I have only a short time ago received into the saturated mental solution of it which I possess, a determining, forming influence, something that has given crystalline shape to the fluid matter of my thoughts. This influence is not new to the world; it is indeed a very old affair, and is, I suppose, familiar to our teachers in the Church. I am sorry I was not fortunate enough to meet with it before. I begin to suspect that in the treasure-house of Christian theology there may be hidden many old things good still to help us in trouble. At least I count it my loss that I never heard until a few weeks ago of the scholastic doctrine of Omnipotence, the doctrine in which a distinction is made between what God might be thought of as able to do *de potentia absoluta*, and what He actually can do and does *de potentia ordinata;* that is, between—on the one hand—the absolutism of power which, when we mentally abstract power from all His other attributes and characters, we may choose to think of as existing under that unreal supposition; and—on the other hand—the real orderly truth of Him as He wholly is, a truth which precludes any kind of self-contradic-

tion, and therefore makes some things we can think of, or even expect, impossible even for God, who certainly can do all that is possible.

This distinction clears up my thoughts concerning the sources of the popular view of Omnipotence; and it shows, too, that scholastic distinctions still have their uses. I see now that we are in the habit of mentally abstracting God's power from God and setting it up as a sort of idol. We may then easily come to think of Him as able under all circumstances, though not by any means willing under some circumstances, to act *de potentia absoluta;* whereas the schoolmen knew, it seems, that absolute power is a mere fiction of the abstractive human mind, and that this fictitious abstraction is useful, only as all such fictions are, in clearing up to an uncertain extent our mental confusion in face of a whole too great for comprehension. God is completely, perfectly co-ordinated; and therefore we may be certain that He will always and does always act *de potentia ordinata.* Consequently, although we may say that God, acting *de potentia absoluta* as in unreal supposition, could torture an innocent child, yet in reality He never can do so, if only because He is love and wisdom and goodness, and because all these characters in Him are perfectly one and completely ordered in harmony with His power. Similarly we may say that God could lie, but also that He can not and does not. And when we face these two pairs of statements we see that it is better in a general way to put one out of each pair aside. Only when for particular purposes of our own we elect, consciously

and with full awareness of what we are doing, to think of power as the only attribute of God, is there any sense in speaking of it as absolute. When we think of Him as the living God, in vital relations with us and with all His living worlds, we must try to think of Him without giving place in our minds to such destructive abstraction; and certainly without first robbing Him of His wholeness and then misjudging Him because He seems the poor thing that we have made. But, when we have settled this, a multitude of practical questions and speculative problems come into view as related to our decision. How are we to know, for instance, what God in His wholeness and *de potentia ordinata* can do or cannot do? If Omnipotence is the power of doing all that is possible without self-contradiction, what kinds of things in this world of concrete operation are impossible? Do we, for example, not infrequently pray for things that involve contradictions and absurdities —actual self-contradiction in God? Do we sometimes reproach Him in our hearts, or turn away from Him, only because He has not done that which we think He could have done if only He would, but which in truth He could not do? Is it true that, as some critics of Christianity say, God is powerless in respect of the suffering and evil of the world? Is it true, in fact, that, as Christians may say, all power in respect of these is given to the Son of Man?

Innumerable questions arise in our minds. It is plain that we must think the matter out; it is impossible for any thoughtful man to leave it in this state. The problem haunts the mind once it is

raised. It haunts us because it is a practical problem; it affects a man's down-sitting and up-rising, his daily going-out and coming-in—that is, if he is a religious man and conscious of his organic relation to the power of God. For myself, I am driven to some abstraction by mental incapacity, driven to it in spite of all its dangers, in order to get a firm footing, a rock to stand upon; and I choose for myself to abstract from the incomprehensible totality of God the character of Love. I say that for me, first and foremost, God shall be Love; and upon this conception I take my stand. I do so for many reasons, and among them is my belief that perfect Love is not only the greatest power in the universe, a power that in the long run nothing evil and no suffering can withstand, but is also the highest wisdom, the fulfilment of justice, and the supreme manifestation of goodness. So for my own particular purpose I use Love to stand for the wholeness of God because it involves the least dishonour to Him and produces a smaller amount of loss than any other human conception; and I use it not only to fix my own position, but to test my judgement of all things that come before me, and happen in me and all the world. Other men, as I have said, select Power, and think of it and its effects as more or less out of relation to love, or wisdom, or goodness. The real determining cause of my own selection is, no doubt, my acceptance of the revelation of God as love which is given to us among men, and consummately in Christ. But for that I might very likely have chosen otherwise, and even with it other men choose otherwise, as

Calvin did, upon whom Christianity made a different mark. The result of my selection of love as standing-point and test is that I am quite sure God cannot hinder or remove the evil and suffering of the world by any divine *fiat.* He cannot say "let there be light" in such a way as to cause the darkness of the world to be done away with as we often wish it to be done away with, in our impatience and unwisdom and foolish love. I am quite sure that at least these two things, moral evil and spiritual darkness, are things to be overcome, things that hurt and harm the creatures of the love of God; and I am equally sure that it is not that God *will* not remove them here and now but that He *cannot.* I believe that here and now, as always and everywhere, He is doing everything concretely possible in order that they should be removed; but I believe also that not only a complete removal, but even a partial and particular removal of them by His immediate determination, is among the things concretely impossible. *It is not done,* therefore—I say to myself—it cannot be done. I am able to say this because God, in my eyes, is Love. But I see that something very great is being done in the world, by men, to remove these things; and I believe that these men are united in and with the divine-human Son of Man, and that God Himself incarnate is working in and by them. As I see the world, all human power is power of God; and therefore we are His instruments in the world. In us His Incarnation is extending, and in us His Omnipotence is at work. That which He cannot do without us He is in process of doing with us. We may be

friends and helpers of God; but on the other hand we are true owners and possessors of power, and we may be in enmity against God, and act as effective hinderers of His will. I see divine love rejected and made powerless in men; I see divine will perverted, divine power put to base uses. And I am sure that God—who is thus being rejected and misused, who is thus being made to suffer—although He is almighty cannot make men good or loving or wise by force, nor effect the obvious contradiction of compelling them to help Him of their free consent, the only consent worth having. But I should not be sure of all these things if I were not sure of love, if I did not elect to take my stand upon this character, and from it survey God and man and the world; and if I were not convinced that omnipotence does not include the possibility of self-contradiction.

There are critics of Christianity who, like Schopenhauer, choose Will instead of Love; and some of them add to it the quality of benevolence. They say that the divine will is benevolent will, and so they say a great deal. It is not a far cry from benevolence to love; and a God who is will-power and benevolence is more than an impersonal creator and maker. These men, unless I mistake them, do not fully recognize what benevolence implies in the way of purpose, and meaning, and conscious direction in the operations of power and will. If a man does not wish to describe by implication a God who stands for us as at least personal, however far He may overpass such poor and obviously incomplete personality as our own, he will do well to avoid speaking of benevo-

lence in connexion with the universal will-power which he acknowledges. There are many men who speak of a benevolent will, of a power making for righteousness and the like; and it is worth while to point out to all such men that they are not facing fairly what their words imply of our right to speak and act as finding, by experience, personality in God, a personality effectively at work with and in us, and needed, surely, to complete our own. And here, thinking of this question of personality, I find myself again confronted by the special limitation of God which the fact of our personality, incomplete though it is, must introduce. If there is one thing obvious and especially significant in the matter it is that, taking persons as they are, God is unable to compel them to be wise, good, loving, and beautiful in the divine fashion. He cannot compel them either directly or indirectly, because if He did they would cease to be persons and be converted, directly or indirectly, into mere puppets. They might be admirable, but they would no longer be in His "image," they would be "only His footprints," as Eckhart said of *things* as distinguished from *persons*. Now, this conversion of men into machines would plainly involve self-contradiction in God, the producer of men; and so I quite easily give up any desire to see compulsion, direct or indirect, applied by divine power to the moral condition of men; and I refrain easily from blaming God for not changing their immoral or foolish condition. Nor do I blame Him for not arresting the consequences which result from the faults of their condition; for I see that this arrest

of consequences would be a form of arbitrary interference with their development as persons, and that it also, as well as more obvious and flagrant instances, would involve self-contradiction in God, within whose purpose their development as persons must be included.

Again, with regard to physical happenings, matters of earth and body, of suns and stars, and physical energies, I am prepared to admit that what we call scientific laws and generalizations are summaries of the revealed word and work of God, in which we discover not only a particular mode of His power but its limitations. It may well be that He is showing us, through ourselves, how to see where self-contradiction in relation to the exercise of this mode of the divine power would come in; and our experience of the physical ways of divine action which we summarize as physical laws may be the revelation of this truth. I am quite prepared to believe this; I am, indeed, very glad to believe it.

I am, in fact, prepared to believe that in the immense co-ordinated purpose of His love, and the innumerable modes of His power, there is room for innumerable kinds of self-contradiction, were self-contradiction possible for Him at all; and that when we find that He never does things except in one way we may be sure that this one way is the way by which some particular kind of self-contradiction is escaped, a way that is not chosen arbitrarily, but is inherently best according to the very nature of God, in whom all characters and attributes are to be considered as conditioning every mode of His operation.

For me God seems manifestly limited by the states and conditions of derived nature in the things and persons who are constituted in it by Him. Christians of a former day went beyond all this to the root of the matter, and spoke of the "Son" as being a limit of the "Father"—"*Mensura Patris Filius*," Irenæus said. They recognized distinction within the divine unity of existence, and therefore saw in God original, fundamental, essential limitation. Within Himself, according to this teaching, as well as in His relation to created worlds, God has His own limitation, a limitation not arbitrary, not merely self-imposed, but inherent and necessary; and at the bottom of the teaching lay the experience of men, as it lies at the bottom of all theology worth considering.

Men are more powerful and far more responsible than they know; Christ, who claimed for the Son of Man the possession of the power of God upon earth, revealed thereby a truth of God's relation with all men. We should do well to learn more of the message conveyed in the prologue to the Fourth Gospel, where the wisdom of Greece and Alexandria and the moral conscience and insight of the Hebrew are at one with the knowledge of Christ. We have forgotten it, or we are neglecting it. Everywhere we need to learn again that of which the philosophers and the scientific men are now, more or less unwittingly, reminding us—the sublime truth that God acts in this world *in* and *by* men, and that when we clamour for action *upon* them we are like the Pharisees who asked for a sign from heaven, and received in answer the sign of the prophet on earth.

We must look experience in the face, and look ourselves in the face. We must try to think of God as indwelling all; and then, ceasing to clamour for the sign, for an external operation of God over men, we must take up the burden and the splendid privilege of our inheritance as not only sons of man and prophets, but sons of God and possessors of the power that He royally bestows. By the revelation in Christ, and by the revelation in our scientific men and our philosophers which belongs to it, we are being told the same thing. We are being shown the limitation of Almighty God, of Him whose power is the sum of all power, of Him who is effecting and producing all things that are real. The revelation points us to the truth and meaning of experience. If we look upon the power of God as all the power there is, yet ordered and conditioned, in His incomprehensible wholeness, by His internal distinctions (which we have to speak of in terms of the highest that we know, in terms of personality), by His creation of things and persons, and by His incarnation in created persons, we are looking, not only in the Christian fashion, but very rationally, at experience, and the ways of God are to that extent justified among us. If we want to go beyond experience, if we want to speculate concerning the mysterious depths of being from which we issue—the *abyss*, as Boehme calls it, of God—we shall certainly find new speculative difficulties. We may find new light, as Boehme did, but only if we seek as Boehme sought; and not in the direction of absolutism, which the lesson of experience forbids. But there is little prac-

tical value in such speculation and considerable danger, whereas there is very great practical value in recognizing both the practical limitation of the power of God in relation to things as they are and seem to us, and the office and duties of man as at once the instrument and the responsible wielder of that power in his world.

The conception of God as limited in power is as old as Christianity, yet we are startled by new declarations of it. The popular belief in the operation of God *de potentia absoluta*, as scholastic teaching puts it, has come to seem the true Christian teaching. We need not wonder that it stands in the way of many religious men, and poisons much controversy. If in this fulness of time theological teachers will frankly recognize, and preach in plain terms, the practical limitation of God, and the solidarity and responsibility of men as His personal instruments, they will go far to meet the objections and the needs of a very large number of men who are now driven to inconsistency because they must be religious and cannot find a way to be a Christian.

One thing, however, we must never forget, and that is the problem of the meaning of the word *man* and of the meaning of the word *God*, but especially that of the meaning of man. "Know Thyself, and and thou shalt know God" might well be written across all our controversy concerning religion. We must bear in mind the fact that the problem exists, and that the meaning of those two words *man* and *God* has changed, is changing, and will change. No meaning that leaves out of sight the fundamental

and ideal oneness of God with man can be satisfactory to us now, no meaning that leaves out the fact of process within that oneness, of gradual realization of the ideal, of failure to realize it, can match the facts of our experience. If there is to be a new theological interpretation it must grapple with these difficulties; if we are to think out our enduring religion we must remember them.

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